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HISTORY
OF
THE ROMANS
UNDER THE EMPIRE.

BY
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CONTENTS

OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

CHAPTER LX.

Character of the Flavian or Antonine Era.—Restoration and maintenance of peace by Vespasian.—Reaction from the extravagance of recent times.—Vespasian's habits and policy.—Census and financial measures.—New Forum and Temple of Peace.—Endowment of the rhetoricians and teachers of literature.—The philosophers expelled from Rome, and execution of Helvidius Priscus.—Demolition of Nero's Golden House.—Baths of Titus.—The Colosseum.—Death of Vespasian, A. D. 79: A. U. 832.—Titus assumes the Empire.—Relations of Titus with Berenice.—Favour with which he was regarded by the Romans.—His death, A. D. 81: A. U. 834; and character.—Destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and death of the elder Pliny.— A. D. 71-81: A. U. 824-834. Page 7

CHAPTER LXI.

Domitian emperor.—His education and character.—External history of this reign.—Campaigns of Agricola in Britain, A. D. 78-84: A. U. 831-837.—He is recalled from the conquest of Caledonia.—Domitian's expedition against the Chatti, A. D. 84: A. U. 837.—He claims a victory, and assumes the title of Germanicus.—Fiscal necessities and commencement of confiscations.—Campaigns against the Dacians.—Defeat and death of Fuscus.—Victory of Julianus.—Peace with the Dacians, A. D. 90: A. U. 843.—A pretended Nero.—Successes in Africa.—Revolt of Antoninus, A. D. 93: A. U. 846.—Renewed cruelties and alarms of Domitian. 63

CHAPTER LXII.

Internal history under Domitian.—His character, and strength of the evidence against it.—His reign an epoch of reaction.—He affects to be a reformer of manners.—Measures in honour of the Gods.—Prosecution of unchaste vestals.—Fate of Cornelia.—Enforcement of the laws of adultery.—The Scantinian Law.—Laws against mutilation.—Restrictions imposed on the mimes.—Decree against the Chaldeans and philosophers, A. D. 89.—Economic measures.—Restoration of the Capitol.—Ascription of Divinity to Domitian.—Cult of Isis and Cybele.—Tribute enforced on the Jews.—Death of Clemens, and alleged persecution of the Christians.—Domitian as a govern-

or, administrator, and legislator.—He countenances delation.—Favours the soldiers.—Caresses the populace.—Spectacles.—The Capitoline and Alban contests.—Patronage of literature repaid by flattery.—Domitian's grim humour.—The Council of the Turbot, and funeral banquet.—Death of Agricola, A. D. 93; with suspicion of poison: followed by proscription of senators, and second edict against the philosophers.—Reign of terror.—Domitian's personal alarms.—He is assassinated by his freedmen, A. D. 96.—(A. D. 81-96: A. U. 834-849.) Page 98

CHAPTER LXIII.

Accession of Nerva.—Reaction against the tyranny of Domitian moderated by the clemency of Nerva.—The Prætorians demand the punishment of Domitian's assassins.—Association of Trajan in the Empire.—Death of Nerva, A. D. 98: A. U. 851.—Origin and early career of Trajan.—His position and operations on the Rhenish frontier.—Roman fortifications between the Rhine and Danube.—Trajan's moderation and popularity in Rome.—Pliny's Panegyric.—Expedition against the Dacians, A. D. 101.—Trajan crosses the Danube.—His successes and triumph, A. D. 103.—Second expedition, A. D. 104.—Bridge over the Danube.—Conquest and annexation of Dacia.—The Ulpian Forum and Trajan's Column at Rome.—Conquests in Arabia.—Trajan's architectural works in the city and the provinces.—Vigilance, splendour, and economy of his administration.—His personal qualities, countenance, and figure.—(A. D. 96-115: A. U. 849-868.) 158

CHAPTER LXIV.

Effect of the Flavian reaction on Roman literature.—Comparison of Lucan and Silius Italicus: of Seneca and Quintilian.—Pliny the Naturalist.—Scholastic training.—Juvenal compared with Persius: Statius with Ovid: Martial with Horace.—The Historians: Tacitus: ingenuity of his plan.—His prejudices and misrepresentations.—Prevalence of biography.—Tacitus and Suetonius.—Uncritical spirit of historical composition.—Memoirs and correspondence.—Pliny the Younger.—Interest attaching to his Letters.—Mutual approximation of the philosophical sects.—Prevalence of suicide.—Corellius.—Silius.—Arria.—Corruption of society.—Military manners.—Life among the intelligent nobles.—Spurinna.—Pliny the Elder.—Pliny the Younger.—Villas of the nobility.—The Laurentine and Tuscan of Pliny.—The Surrentine of Pollius.—Decline of masculine character among the Romans.—Exceptions.—Tacitus and Juvenal masculine writers.—Contrast in their tempers.—Last champions of Roman ideas. 220

CHAPTER LXV.

General expectation of a Deliverer favoured by Augustus and Vespasian.—Revival of Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem.—The schools of Tiberias.—Numbers of the Jews in the East.—Seditions raised and suppressed.—The Christians regarded with suspicion as a Jewish sect.—Alleged decrees of Nero and Domitian.—Persecution in Bithynia, and Letters of Pliny and Trajan, A. D. 111: A. U. 864.—Martyrdom of Ignatius.—The Church, the Canon, and Episcopacy.—Trajan's expedition into the East A. D. 114: A. U. 867.—Earthquake at Antioch, A. D. 115.—Annexation of Armenia.—

Trajan's conquests beyond the Tigris.—Overthrow of the Parthian monarchy.—Trajan launches on the Persian Gulf.—Is recalled by defections in his rear.—His ill success before Atræ.—He returns to Antioch.—His illness and death at Selinus, A. D. 117: A. U. 870.—Revolt of the Jews in the East: in Cyprus, Cyrene, and Egypt.—Revolt in Palestine.—Akiba and Barcochebas, leaders of the Jews.—Suppression of the revolt.—Foundation of the colony of *Ælia Capitolina*.—Final separation of the Christians from the Jews.—(A. D. 111-133: A. U. 864-886.) Page 279

CHAPTER LXVI.

Birth and parentage of Hadrian.—His education and accomplishments.—His rise under Trajan's guardianship.—His alleged adoption and succession.—He abandons Trajan's conquests in the East.—His campaign in Mesia, A. D. 118.—Suppression of a conspiracy against him.—He courts the senate and the people.—Hadrian's first progress.—He visits Gaul, Germany, Spain, Mauretania, confers with the King of Parthia. visits Athens, Sicily and Carthage, A. D. 119-123.—His second progress: he resides at Athens, Alexandria, and Antioch: Character of learning and society at these cities respectively.—He revisits Athens, and returns finally to Rome, A. D. 125-134.—His buildings at Rome.—Adoption of *Celotius Verus*, A. D. 135, who dies prematurely.—Adoption of *Aurelius Antoninus*, A. D. 138, who adopts *Annius Verus* and *L. Verus*.—Infirmities and death of Hadrian, A. D. 138.—His character and personal appearance.—A. D. 117-138: A. U. 870-891.) 321

CHAPTER XLVII.

Early career of the emperor Antoninus Pius.—Attitude of the Barbarians.—The wall of Antoninus in Britain.—His paternal government at home.—His indulgence to the Christians.—His virtues and happiness.—Vices of the empress *Faustina*.—Early promise of *M. Aurelius*.—His testimony to the virtues of Antoninus.—Death of Antoninus Pius, and remarks on the character of his epoch.—Review of the political elements of Roman society.—1. The populace of the city.—2. The provincials.—Progress of uniformity.—Extension of the franchise.—Development of the civil law.—3. The Senate: its pride, pretensions and imbecility.—4. The prætorians and the legions.—The final supremacy of the soldiers inevitable.—(A. D. 138-161: A. U. 891-914.) 395

CHAPTER XLVIII.

M. Aurelius Antoninus sole emperor.—Association of *Verus*.—Disturbances abroad and calamities at home.—*Verus* conducts a war with Parthia.—Joint triumph of the emperors, 166.—Administration of *Aurelius* at Rome.—Inroads of the Germans, Scythians and Sarmatians on the Northern frontier.—Pestilence spread through the Empire by the legions returning from Syria.—The emperors advance to Aquileia, 167.—They cross the Alps, 168.—Return and death of *Verus*, 169.—*Aurelius* on the Danube.—His victory over the Quadi, 174.—His domestic troubles.—Unworthiness of his son *Commodus*.—Licentiousness of his consort *Faustina*.—Revolt and death of *Avidius Cassius*, 175.—*Aurelius* in the East.—He returns to Rome and triumphs over

the Sarmatians, 176.—Repairs again to the Danube.—His successes over the Barbarians, and death, 180.—Compared with Alfred the Great.

Symptoms of decline of the Empire.—1. Contraction of the circulation.—2. Decrease in population.—3. Effects of vice, arising from slavery.—4. Exhaustion of Italian blood, ideas, and principles.—5. Effect of pestilence and natural disturbances.—Revival of superstitious observances and persecution of the Christians.—The "Commentaries" of M. Aurelius.—Stoicism.—New Platonism.—Revival of positive belief.—Christianity.—Conclusion.—(A. D. 161-180: A. U. 914-998.) . Page 450

HISTORY OF THE ROMANS

UNDER THE EMPIRE.



CHAPTER LX.

A. D. 71–81. A. U. 824–834.

CHARACTER OF THE FLAVIAN OR ANTONINE ERA.—RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PEACE BY VESPASIAN.—REACTION FROM THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF RECENT TIMES.—VESPASIAN'S HABITS AND POLICY.—CENSUS AND FINANCIAL MEASURES.—NEW FORUM AND TEMPLE OF PEACE.—ENDOWMENT OF THE RHETORICIANS AND TEACHERS OF LITERATURE.—THE PHILOSOPHERS EXPELLED FROM ROME, AND EXECUTION OF HELVIDIUS PRISCUS.—DEMOLITION OF NERO'S GOLDEN HOUSE.—BATHS OF TITUS.—THE COLOSSEUM.—DEATH OF VESPASIAN, A. D. 79, A. U. 832.—TITUS ASSUMES THE EMPIRE.—RELATIONS OF TITUS WITH BERENICE.—FAVOUR WITH WHICH HE WAS REGARDED BY THE ROMANS.—HIS DEATH, A. D. 81, A. U. 834 ; AND CHARACTER.—DESTRUCTION OF HERCULANUM AND POMPEII, AND DEATH OF THE ELDER PLINY.

WE now approach a period of Roman history, distinguished by the general prosperity of the administration, the tranquil obedience of the people, and, with a single exception, by the virtue and public spirit of the rulers. The period thus favourably characterized, embraces eight reigns, and about an hundred and ten years, from the accession of Vespasian to the death of M. Aurelius. It has been usual, indeed, to confine this famous interval of good government within narrower limits, by making it commence after the death of Domitian ;

The Flavian or Antonine period of Roman history.

and it has been generally designated by the name of the Antonines, the last two of the emperors it includes. But both the limitation and the designation seem to me inappropriate. The Antonines thus referred to occupy in fact but forty years of this period, while the name they bore was perpetuated, in compliment to their virtues, through several ensuing reigns; and if we are to speak of an Antonine period at all, we ought to extend it to the death of Alexander Severus. On the other hand, the era of peace and legal government, which we have been taught to associate with the title of Antonine, was really introduced by Vespasian; and the system commenced by him which remained in force, with but one interruption, above a century, might more justly and more intelligibly be styled the Flavian. Though founded on a military revolution, this system was marked by the utmost outward deference for the senate. In the respect they showed to this antique image of aristocratic authority, Vespasian, Trajan and the Antonines were not surpassed by Augustus himself, while other successors of Augustus had scarce pretended to respect it at all. For more than a century the long struggle between the emperor and the nobility, between the army and the senate, the sword and the gown, the struggle which had drained the life-blood of Rome from Marius to Nero, slumbered in repose. The claims of the contending powers seemed to be reconciled; the real authority remained, no doubt, with the military chief, but the semblance was imparted to his rivals with a grace and a show of liberality which cajoled them into complacent acquiescence. After the death of Aurelius, or, more properly, with the accession of Septimius Severus, the spell was once more broken, the veil was rent asunder, and the senate could never again be deceived into a belief in its sovereign authority. One or two faint attempts to reassert it were speedily and harshly suppressed, and the last sparks of independence were finally extinguished in the administrative revolution of Diocletian and Constantine.

It is not, however, in the pretended government by the senate, a mere shadow of sovereignty, that the peculiar feat-

ures of the period now before us are traced. Of the eight Cæsars in succession from Vespasian downwards, one only was a debauchee and a tyrant; seven were men of sense and vigour, able rulers, just and beneficent administrators. This unexampled series of good princes in an absolute monarchy has been regarded as a fortunate accident; but it is not fair to ascribe it to accident only. The men were the product of their times, and were legitimate representatives of the class from which they sprang, the military aristocracy of the empire. With the single exception above cited, they had all been trained from youth in habits of discipline and the discharge of public duties; they had learnt to obey before they were called upon to govern; a training which seldom failed, under the stern traditions of Roman education, to make men of conduct and self-control. At the same time, the habits of their age, chastened by suffering, and sobered from the debauches of the youth of the empire, did not tempt them, as their predecessors had been tempted, to the gross extravagance and cynicism which disgraced the nobles of the Julian and the Claudian court. The age was better, as we shall see, and the men who represented the age were accordingly better also.

Succession of
good princes.

A period thus marked by virtue in the highest places, and by moderation and sobriety in the ranks beneath is naturally deficient in incident. Still more is the Flavian period deficient in historical records. Tranquillity at home and success, for the most part, abroad, can furnish few events of stirring interest, and few characters attractive or instructive. Accident has deprived us of that large portion of Tacitus's *Histories* in which the career of Vespasian and his sons was doubtless narrated in the fullest detail. The voluminous recital of Dion is reduced, almost at the same moment, to a meagre abridgment; the biographies of Suetonius become, as he approaches his own times, unaccountably slight and superficial. Although the century before us was prolific in historical composition, we possess none but the slightest fragments of contemporary

The period
deficient in
records.

narrative. Our materials for history must be gathered almost wholly from indirect sources ; from letter-writers, panegyrists, satirists and philosophers ; from the scattered intimations of coins and inscriptions, or, as a last resource, from the vague, unfaithful compilations of later ages. The Flavian or Antonine period has indeed attracted the notice of many modern students, and has been eulogized by some as a period of great and exceptionable happiness for mankind.¹ It has been sketched in essays, in which a partial collection of facts, or a skilful disposition of light and shade, has sufficed to give to it precisely those features and characteristics which harmonized with the writer's previous conception. It will be my task to lay before the reader an ample narrative of the events recorded, with such a delineation of the state of affairs as our imperfect information, and my own prescribed limits, will allow.

If the triumph over Judea was celebrated, as we may conjecture, soon after Titus's return from the East,—that is, in the middle of the summer of 824,—it would nearly coincide with the anniversary of Vespasian closes the temple of Janus. Vespasian's assumption of the purple two years previously.² The emperor was now in his sixty-second year ; old enough to feel fatigued by a long ceremonial in which he took personally no interest. He was prouder, we may believe, of the distinguished son who shared his triumph, than of the acclamations with which he was himself saluted, and complained of his own weakness in accepting in his old age honours to which he had little claim from his origin, and

¹ I need scarcely refer the reader of Roman History to the early chapters of Gibbon's History, which are animated throughout by this idea, or to the paragraph headed "general felicity," near the end of ch. 2., in which it is more distinctly indicated. A few years later Hegewisch worked it out, with special reference to Gibbon's views, in a formal treatise, on "The Epoch of Roman History which was the happiest for the Human Race ;" by which he does not mean the happiest epoch of all history, an extravagance which seems to have been reserved for a very recent essayist.

² The accession is dated, it will be remembered, from the salutation by the army at Cæsarea, July 17., U. C. 822, A. D. 69.

which he so little coveted as the reward of his achievements.¹ The descent of the victor from the Capitol, and the return of his soldiers to their quarters, were followed by the solemn announcement of peace restored to the empire. The new Augustus closed once more the temple of Janus, which had stood open since the German wars of the first princeps; or, according to the computation of the christian Orosius, from the birth of Christ to the overthrow of the Jewish people: for the senate had refused to sanction Nero's caprice in closing it on his precarious accommodation with Parthia.² Never before had this solemn act addressed the feelings of the citizens so directly; for in the recent season of war they had been made to taste more nearly and more painfully of its horrors than at any time since the days of Marius and Sulla. They had undergone a mutiny of their legions, a revolt in their provinces, the bitter hostility of a rival nation not yet broken to subjection; and all these perils had been enhanced by the irruption of barbarian hordes, in more than one quarter, within their frontiers. But these troubles, however terrible, were counted as nothing in comparison with the strife of Romans against Romans within the limits of Italy, even within the walls of Rome itself. For a moment, the emperor, the senate and every other authority, had fallen beneath the heels of a tumultuous soldiery, and the laws had succumbed to the furious violence of the camp. The civilization of eight centuries had lain at the mercy of worse than barbarian frenzy.

The preservation of the empire from so many perils

¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 12.: "meritove plecti qui triumphum, quasi aut debitum majoribus suis aut speratum unquam sibi, tam inepte senex concupisset." In a similar spirit he was wont to jeer at the folly of men who affected the Empire: "stultitiæ arguens, qui ignorarent quanta moles molestiaque imperio inesse." Victor, *de Caesar.* 9.

² Orosius, vii. 3.; from a lost passage of Tacitus: "sene Augusto Janus patefactus usque ad Vespasiani duravit imperium." The frontier wars of Rome could hardly be said at any moment to have entirely ceased; but the transient lull of hostilities on the conclusion of peace with Parthia, A. D. 63, just before the outbreaks on the Rhine and in Palestine, was perhaps as complete as at any time previous or subsequent.

around it and within it, is one of the most remarkable events of our history. Yet this is not the first time that in the midst of local rebellions and central dissension, the great bulk of the provinces, instead of rising in one mass against their conquerors, had remained passive under a yoke which it might seem easy to shake off for ever. The same phenomenon had occurred during the contests of Cæsar and Pompeius, and again when the whole Roman world was convulsed by the struggle of Octavius and Antonius. If the frantic resistance of the Jews gave birth now to no sympathetic movements among the subject races of the East; if in the West the revolt of the legions excited no general outbreak of the nations from which they had chiefly sprung; if the convention of the states of Gaul had separated with a resolution to stand aloof from the military mutiny, and the prospect of an independent sovereignty had roused no patriotic feeling among the descendants of Vercingetorix; the Romans themselves might ascribe this apathy to a sense of the solid benefits of their rule. Such, indeed, is the explanation to which Tacitus, feeling evidently that an explanation is required, himself inclines: nevertheless we must remember that it will hardly apply to the circumstances of the earlier period, when the character of the Roman sway had not yet made itself fully felt. We must bear in mind, however, the great deficiency in ancient society of the means by which common feeling and opinion are concentrated and diffused through large tracts of country, and among widespread populations. Tribes and races were then more sharply separated from each other in thought, speech and usage; the centres of local action were indefinitely multiplied; communication was tedious or uncertain; the interchange of commerce was irregular and slender; the continent was an archipelago of insulated communities, in which men were separated as much by their social jealousies as by the natural impediments to union and combination. It was only by the control of a powerful aristocracy that these clans could at any time be moved together. From the period of their con-

Tranquillity of
the provinces.

quest it had been the policy of the Romans to extinguish the authority of the chiefs throughout the provinces, and to set up in its place a multitude of local democracies, weak in themselves, full of domestic jealousies and foreign rivalries, suspicious of every appeal to a common sentiment, looking with petty exclusiveness to their own special interests, and neglecting more and more even the imperfect means of inter-communication which they possessed. Perhaps the Romans, accustomed themselves to the contemplation of national feelings and common motives of action, exaggerated the national character of the resistance made to their arms in Gaul, Spain, Britain and Germany. It was not the mere illusion of vanity that induced a Cæsar or a Tacitus to dignify with the name of a vast nation the puny efforts of a mere clan or robber's following. At all events we may be sure that no common bond of feeling or interest existed in any of those great provinces at the end of the first century of the empire.¹

Outside the bounds of Roman dominion there was still less opportunity for concerted action. The barbarians beyond the Rhine and the Danube, on the shores of the Euxine or the Caspian, always restless and generally aggressive, could only combine under the precarious authority of some leader of unusual qualities or fortune. A Maroboduus or a Mithridates might have made himself formidable to Rome at the crisis of the late civil commotions: but the Germans had been skilfully divided, the Scythians and the Dacians had not yet learnt to combine; a single detachment in Mœsia was sufficient to strengthen the presidary legions, and assure the safety of the northern frontier. The Parthians, more vigilant, more politic, more united, were awed by their recent recollection

Respite from
foreign aggression.

¹ It may be added that the provinces were generally disarmed. Juvenal's rhetorical exclamation: "*spoliatis arma supersunt*," is hardly true. The proprietors, moreover, were held in check by their own slaves. The Jews could not have maintained their internecine war against Rome, had not their social system been very different in this respect from that of Gaul or Africa.

of Corbulo; and they too had their own troubles at this moment to contend with. The arms of Vologesus were occupied by an incursion of the Alani, who were pouring eastward from the mouth of the Tanais, and thundering against the Caspian gates. Vologesus had proudly offered Vespasian the assistance of a force of Parthian cavalry: but no sooner was the emperor seated on his throne, than the Parthian found it convenient to ask for assistance in his turn. Vespasian, who had haughtily declined foreign aid himself, was at liberty to reject his rival's petition.¹ He had no taste for enterprise or adventure: he looked forward to no distant schemes of policy; his own means were straitened, and the resources of the empire crippled. He had just inaugurated an era of peace, and the tranquillity of the state was as dear to him as his own. Perhaps his greatest difficulty lay in resisting the solicitations of Domitian, who is said to have aspired to lead an army in person, and to have importuned his father for the means of reaping laurels for himself²

The joy of the citizens at their extraordinary deliverance is strongly marked in the scanty records of the time which have descended to us. The Peace of Vespasian was celebrated by a new bevy of poets and historians not less loudly than the Peace of Augustus. A new era of happiness and prosperity was not less passionately predicted. Even the dry prose of the philosopher Pliny bursts into luxuriance at the sight of the divine emperor marching with his sons majestically along *the sacred path of virtue and beneficence, trodden by the chiefs of Roman story*.³ The medals of the period were stamped with

The peace of Vespasian applauded by the Romans.

¹ It was remarked that Vespasian allowed Vologesus to address him a letter, with the superscription, "Arsaces, king of kings, to Flavius Vespasianus, greeting:" and even used the same terms in his reply, without assuming himself the imperial titles. Dion, lxvi. 11.

² Suet. *Domit.* 2. Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 7. 4. Dion, lxvi. 15. This incident is referred to the year U. C. 828., A. D. 75.

³ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ii. 7.: "Hæc proceres iere Romani; hæc cœlesti passu cum liberis suis vadit maximus omnis ævi rector Vespasianus Augustus, fessis rebus subveniens." Com. Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar.* 9.: "Exsanguem diu fes-

repeated allusions to this consummation of the emperor's fortune, a consummation not attained by unworthy compliances, but dignified by the restoration of domestic freedom and the overthrow of every foreign enemy.¹ This was the public service to which the Flavian dynasty could appeal, and it covered defects in title which would have startled the Romans of an earlier day. The family of the divine Julii, divine in birth, in beauty, and in genius, was replaced by a brood of mere plebeians, adapted neither by their origin, their history, nor their personal characteristics, to engage the sympathies of a superstitious and imaginative people. The father, the first of his name who had risen to civil honours, had only been known, while yet a subject, as the plainest of citizens, thrifty and penurious in his habits, mean in his address, homely in countenance and figure, gifted with no spark of enthusiasm or genius, a man who had descended from the highest office to exercise a trade, where he seemed to be just in his proper sphere; and in accordance with this character, after his accession to power he made no secret of his contempt for the flatterers who pretended to discover an heroic origin for his race.² Of the sons, the elder, though rarely seen in the city, had been shunned there as a dissolute youth, of foreign manners and inclinations; the younger was only too notorious for his frivolity and debaucheries. But Vespasian and Titus had deserved well of the republic in the field;

sumque terrarum orbem brevi refecit;" and Q. Curtius, x. 9., if we may assign this date to the author of the "Life of Alexander." Those who believe that the *Aratea* of "Germanicus Cæsar" is the work of Domitian, will also compare v. 16.: "Pax tua, tuque adsis nato numenque secundes." But, for myself, I adhere to the opinion I formerly expressed, that the "Germanicus Cæsar" of the Codd. is the nephew of Tiberius. Imhof shows, among other arguments, that Domitian never bears this title among his contemporaries, but rather that of "Germanicus Augustus." Imhof, *Domitianus*, p. 134.

¹ Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* i. 59. Eckhel, *Doct. Numm. Vett.* vi. 323-330. See the legends: "Roma resurges:" "Pax orbis terrarum:" "Paci æternæ domus Vespasiani:" "Assertor libertatis publicæ:" "Signis receptis," &c.

² Suet. *Vesp.* 12.: "Conantes quosdam originem Flavie gentis ad conditores Reatinos comitemque Herculis irrisit ultro."

they had saved their country from its foes : and even Domitian, contemptible as he was, might find some favour with the citizens as the defender of the Capitol against a new Gaulish invasion, as a patriot who had contended for the honour of the national deities, and *waged the wars of Jove*.¹

But in fact the regard in which the new dynasty was held, rested on deeper feelings than those of mere personal admiration. The temper of the Romans had undergone a great and sudden change. The voluptuous luxury of the early empire had reached its climax under Nero, and the nation was suffering from the effects of its indulgence. It was sick at heart, debilitated and remorseful. The rash attempt to follow their sovereign in the race of extravagance had overwhelmed the fortunes of his wealthiest courtiers ; his tyranny had crushed the most powerful nobles ; the conflagration of the city had destroyed the palaces and accumulated treasures of many of the chief families ; disturbance in the provinces had dried up the sources of opulence, which had been wont to flow with unbroken current to Rome and Italy. The vulgar magnificence of upstart freedmen had outraged the national dignity, and put prodigality out of fashion. When Vespasian, by his firmness in redressing extortion abroad, and his vigilance in checking peculation at home, enforced the moderation recommended by his own conspicuous example, he found his subjects well inclined to hail the new era, and accept with satisfaction the restrictions

¹ Statius, *Sylv.* v. 3. 198. :

“ Et Senonum furias Latiae summere cohortes.”

And *Thebaid.* i. 21. :

“ Aut defensa prius vix pubescentibus annis
Bella Jovis.”

The defence of the Capitol was likened to the wars of Jupiter and the Titans. At a much later period we meet with an allusion to paintings on this subject on the walls of the temple :

“ Juvat infra tecta Tonantis
Cernere Tarpeia pendentes rupe Gigantas.”

Claudian, xxviii. 45.

he might place on display and expenditure. Possibly, indeed, the futility of sumptuary enactments had been discovered; but while the inquisitions of the *ædiles* had proved always ineffectual, the turn given to social manners by the habits of the court seems to have been both immediate and lasting. For a hundred years, says Tacitus, from the battle of Actium to the reign of Galba, the refinements of the table, the coarsest and most pervading form of luxury among the Romans, had flourished rankly; but though there continued, no doubt, to occur many instances of gross and profuse living, the period of the worst extravagance now passed away, never to return in its pristine licentiousness.¹ One happy effect of the late bloody conflicts was the introduction of many new men from provincial families into the magistracy and senate, and these offshoots of a ruder stock retained, even with their enhanced fortunes, much of the simplicity of their ancient manners. We may remark from this time much greater moderation in the tone of Roman literature, and generally more decorum of thought and language, than in the age preceding. The people seem to have become suddenly sobered. Their most cherished delusions had been dispelled by suffering. We meet with little now of the turgid declamation, of which we have heard so much, on the grandeur of Rome, the immensity of her conquests, the eternity of her dominion. Henceforth instead of flaunting contrasts between the fortune of the empire and the meanness of all foreign nations, we shall find the greater happiness and virtue of the simple barbarians insinuated or even asserted. Arms are no longer exalted as the legitimate career of the citizen. Wealth is not ostentatiously worshipped as the

¹ Tac. *Ann.* iii. 55.: "*Luxus mensæ paulatim exolevere.*" Of the existence of the two Apicii, each the model of luxurious living in his own time at Rome, there can be no reasonable doubt. The first lived in the first century before Christ, the second in the first century after. It is to the second that most of our notices refer. The third, who is said to have flourished in the reign of Trajan, i. e. the second century of our era, is only known from one anecdote, which may well be apocryphal, of Athenæus.

highest object of desire. Luxury, and the vices which attend it, are denounced as sins, not merely mocked as vulgar affectations. Obedience is held not less honourable than command; domestic habits and virtues are regarded with pleasure and esteem. On the other hand,—such is the point at which the highest philosophy has arrived,—the true Divinity consists, according to Pliny, in rendering aid as a mortal to fellow mortals. This is recognized, at least among the most intelligent, as the actual origin of mythological romance; and such as this is the godlike career of the august Vespasian, the greatest of all rulers in every age and realm, who sustains with his sons' assistance the tottering fabric of society. This is the career of immortal glory, the only immortality, as the writer plainly intimates, to which man can hope to attain, however natural and pious the custom of ascribing a divine eternity to the great benefactors of their species.¹ Even the court poets were awed to measured decency by the quiet sentiment of the nation. The panegyric of Vespasian by Silius Italicus, the ape of Virgil, is modelled upon that of *Augustus Cæsar, the offspring of the Gods*; but it hardly yields in dignity to one of the finest passages of the *Æneid* while it repudiates its most vicious audacities.²

¹ See the remarkable passage in Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* ii. 5., to part of which I have already referred. “Deus est mortali juvare mortalem, et hæc ad æternam gloriam via. Hac procures iere Romani Hic est vetustissimus referendi bene merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus ascribant. Quippe et omnium aliorum nomina deorum ex hominum nata sunt meritis.”

² Silius, iii. 594.:

“Exin’ se Curibus *virtus cælestis* ad astra
 Efferet
 Hinc pater ignotam donabit vincere Thulen,
 Inque Caledonios primus trahet agmina lucos;
 Compescet ripis Rhenum, reget impiger Afros,
 Palmiferamque senex bello domitabit Idumen;
 Nec Stygis ille lacus viduataque lumine regna,
 Sed Superum sedes, nostrosque tenebit honores.”

I need not repeat, for the classical reader, the corresponding encomium on Augustus, *Æneid*, vi. 793.: “Augustus Cæsar *Divum genus*,” &c.

Yet if we turn from the acts and merits of Vespasian to the lineaments of his face and figure, we can hardly refrain from smiling at the enthusiasm avowed for him. None of the Roman emperors had a countenance prosaic as his; nor do the artists who were occupied upon it, seem to have imagined that they could commend themselves to their patron by an attempt to embellish or idealize it. The monuments of Vespasian represent him as short and compact in figure, with a thick neck and broad sensual chin, a round bald head, small restless eyes, coarse nose and lips, a forehead deeply wrinkled with fatigue rather than with thought, and his whole expression that of uneasiness and effort.¹ It may be worth remarking, as a trait of manners, that the biographer, in noticing the robustness of his health, says that he took no further care of it than to rub his limbs regularly after bathing, and interpose one day's fast in the course of every month. His ordinary habit, after attaining the sovereignty, was to be awakened before the customary hour, that is, before dawn, read his letters and despatches, and then admit his friends to his levée. He slipped his feet into sandals without assistance, huddled on his toga, and after transacting business, drove out and returned for his siesta.² His repose was soothed by female caresses; but after the death of his legitimate consort he was content to renew the less regular union he had previously formed with a freed-woman named Cœnis, and on losing her also, soon after his accession to power, made thenceforth no other permanent connexion.³ From the midday retirement he proceeded to

Personal appearance and habits of Vespasian.

¹ Suetonius describes him with a few graphic touches: "*statura fuit quadrata, compactis firmisque membris, vultu veluti nitentis.*" *Vesp.* 20.

² Suet. *Vesp.* 21, 22.

³ Cœnis was a freedwoman of the Claudian family, and had been a favourite of Antonia, the mother of Claudius. With her Vespasian formed the connexion tolerated by Roman law under the name of *contubernium*. At a later period he made a regular marriage with a Roman matron, by whom he had the two sons who succeeded him. On her decease he recalled Cœnis on

the bath, and thence to supper, at which he demeaned himself with the affability of a man conscious of having discharged to his satisfaction all the duties of the day. His conversation was sprightly, and he allowed his companions almost as much licence in raillery as he assumed for himself; but his humour was reputed somewhat low by the polished wits of the courts of Nero and Otho. Some of his coarse and caustic jests are recorded, which might serve to illustrate the manners of the times, were they fit for modern ears. One perhaps may be repeated, which is characteristic of the man, and has attained celebrity. When seized with his last illness and feeling the near approach of dissolution, *Ah!* he whispered to his attendants, *methinks I am becoming a God.*¹

But if such were the new emperor's relaxations, he was thoroughly in earnest in matters of business. He took a plain soldier's view of his duty, without looking forward as a statesman; but in the daily work before him he shrank from no responsibility. A Roman who understood the office of censor was always in earnest. It involved him in many feuds and some dangers. Tiberius had been too cynical; Caius too reckless; Nero too

A census, and other restorative measures.

the former terms, the law not admitting of union by *confarreatio* or by *æs et libra*, in such a case. Suet. *Vesp.*: "revocavit in contubernium." Coënis died in 824. Dion, lxi. 14.

¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 23.: "Væ! puto deus fio." The popular opinion of Vespasian's amiable qualities is preserved in the romance on the life of Apollonius by Philostratus, but the anecdote there recorded of him can hardly be accepted as history. It is pretended that Vespasian, conversing with the philosopher in Egypt, for whom he felt the highest reverence, and whose guidance he solicited, entreated him to make him emperor: *ποίησόν ηε, ἔφη, βασιλέα* (v. 27.). "I have already done so," replied the sage, "in praying the Gods to give us for emperor a just, generous, temperate, old-fashioned father of a family." "O Jupiter," returned Vespasian, "may I govern wise men, and may wise men govern me!" Then turning to the Egyptians, he said, "Draw from me as from the Nile:" (*ἀρῶσασθε ὡς Νείλου κάμοῦ*). If he really said anything like this, it must have been in a moment of very unusual enthusiasm. It is possible, indeed, that even Vespasian's insensibility was not proof against the intoxication of flattery attending upon a great success.

self-indulgent to accept an invidious responsibility for the sake of the public weal. Augustus had assumed it from policy, Claudius in pedantry fortified by insensibility, but to Vespasian it bore the form of an act of military discipline. The disorders of the times had thinned the ranks of the privileged orders. The senate, it is said, had been reduced to two hundred members.¹ Both senators and knights had been impoverished, degraded by ignominious compliances, blasted by popular odium. Illegitimate pretenders had stepped into the places left vacant by death and ruin. Vespasian set about the revision of the lists, after ancient precedent, and associated his son Titus with himself in the task. The elder seems indeed to have conducted himself with more temper than the younger colleague; for it was against the son rather than the father that the murmurs of the victims were directed. Vespasian's deference to the senate continued after his demise to be noted as the great merit of his administration; and it was mentioned to his honour that for many years he refused to accept the tribunitian power, and the title of Father of his country.² Nor would he have escaped so free from the most odious charges of immorality, lavished at all times on the personal enemies of the order, had he rendered himself obnoxious by the austerity of his censures. But Titus, on the other hand, is branded with the most flagrant imputations, such as, having circulated at first privately, in angry and indignant circles, were too often admitted without proof, but without hesitation, among the

¹ Such is supposed to be the meaning of Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar.* 9, "lectis undique optimis viris mille gentes compositæ, cum ducentas ægerrime reperisset." He has just been speaking of the senate. But, as there were several individual families, and of course many persons of one family in the same gens or house, at the same time members of the senate, the phrase would not be a correct one. Still I can hardly suppose that the author means us to understand that the whole number of Roman houses, patrician and plebeian, was reduced to 200, or that Vespasian created new houses to such an extent.

² Suet. *Vesp.* 12. Even during the civil war he relinquished the imperial etiquette of causing all who approached him to be searched for concealed weapons.

records of history. The inquisition now made into the character, as well as the birth and means of the Roman nobles, furnished no doubt an opportunity for proscribing many persons against whom the Flavian dynasty might harbour ill-will.¹ Titus, we are told, charged with the defence of the new settlement of power, did not scruple, in one instance at least, to procure the assassination of an enemy to his family. He invited a hostile senator, the Vitellian general Cæcina, to supper, and caused him to be waylaid on leaving his presence, and murdered. The proofs of the victim's complicity in a plot were said indeed to be notorious; nevertheless a rumour prevailed, and was accepted by many as true, that his real offence was his supposed intimacy with Titus's favourite Berenice.²

To prop the tottering and almost prostrate commonwealth, then to secure and adorn it, such according to the biographer of the Cæsars was the chief care of Vespasian's principate. Strict discipline must be restored to the camp; the insolence of the victors must be repressed; the angry restlessness of the vanquished must be soothed. Of the Vitellian soldiers the greater number received their discharge, sweetened, no doubt, by adequate compensations; while to those who had shared his victory the conqueror extended no special indulgence, but doled out their legitimate remuneration slowly and grudgingly. The restriction of the first military honours, long unworthily lavished, to the greatest military services, caused perhaps murmurs which have left their echoes in the record of our history.³

The financial crisis, and fiscal policy of Vespasian.

¹ Vespasian assumed the censorship U. C. 825, A. D. 72: "intra quadriennium," says Pliny, writing his Seventh Book (*Nat. Hist.* vii. 50).

² Suet. *Vesp.* 8., *Tit.* 6. Victor, *Epit.* 10. The Cæcina of Suetonius is the Allienus of Dion, lxi. 16., whose criminal intentions are admitted by that writer. Titus is accused of having effected the destruction of other suspected persons by sending his creatures into public places with instructions to call loudly for their punishment, which he pretended to interpret as the voice and declared will of the people.

³ Vespasian restored their due significance to the triumphal ornaments, such as the tunica palmata, which Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero had prostituted

The frugal temper and actual poverty of the emperor were half-disguised by an affected simplicity of manners; as when he rebuked a perfumed candidate with a gesture of disgust, and the sharp remark, *I had rather you had smelt of garlic*. The censorship offered an opportunity for a reconstitution of the provinces and free states, many of which were dealt with according to their political deserts, or sacrificed to the convenience of the treasury. The gift of Latin rights to the whole of Spain was a tribute to the memory of Galba, and to the support his enterprise had received in the adhesion of the Iberians.¹ This favour to the western provinces was balanced by severity towards other portions of the empire. Achaia, to which Nero had precipitately granted freedom, was again reduced, on pretence of an insurrection, to the condition of a taxable province; and Lycia, Rhodes, Byzantium, and Samos, were deprived also of their autonomy.² The dependent sovereignties which had subsisted up this time in Thrace, Cilicia, and Commagene, were finally absorbed into the state, and enrolled among the contributors to the *fiscus*.³ Whatever pretext might be assigned for these harsh measures, they were no doubt really directed by financial expediency. The difficulties of the imperial government were in fact tremendous, and the charges of parsimony or avarice which have been made against this emperor, must be considered in

to men of inferior claims and even to civilians. See Marquardt (Becker's *Handbuch der Alterth.* iii. 2. 453.).

¹ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* iii. 4.

² Suet. *Vesp.* 8. 14.; Pausanias, vii. 17., after mentioning Nero's liberality to Greece: οὐ μὴν Ἑλλησί τε ἐξεγένετο θνασθαι τοῦ δώρου· Οὔεσπασιανοῦ γὰρ μέτα Νέρωνα ἀρξάντος, ἐς ἐμφύλιον στάσιν προήχθησαν, καὶ σφᾶς ἐποτελεῖς τε αὐτίς ὁ Οὔεσπασιανὸς εἶναι φόρων, καὶ ἀκούειν ἐκέλευσεν ἡγεμόνος, ἀπομεμαθηκέναι φήσας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τὸ Ἑλληνικόν. Comp. Philostr. *Vit. Apollon.* v. 41., where the philosopher is said to have expressed his indignation to the emperor's face.

³ Suet. l. c. Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* vii. 7. 1., refers the annexation of Commagene to the year A. D. 72, U. C. 825, when the King Antiochus was brought with his son to Rome. Flaviopolis, in Cilicia, commenced its era with the year 74.

reference to his necessities.¹ The Flavian dynasty succeeded to the inheritance of an exhausted population, a rapacious soldiery, and an empty and embarrassed treasury. The Capitol was not yet completed, and probably large debts remained to discharge on the cost of its reconstruction. The losses of the civil wars had been severe and various. Italy had been devastated, the more distant provinces had been drained. Whole cities awaited the restoring hand of the emperor. Meanwhile the revenues of the wealthiest regions had been embezzled by the prefects, or diverted into the camps. Vespasian not only suspended the dissipation of the finances in the mad luxury of the imperial court, and in the construction and embellishment of the imperial palace; he ordered the demolition of the greater part at least of Nero's golden house. Nevertheless there were other heavy expenses which he could not refuse to assume.² The Capitol was to be rebuilt with a magnificence suited to the age; the temple of Peace, the pledge of his policy, was to be erected; it was essential perhaps to the stability of the new dynasty to acknowledge the principle of deifying deceased emperors, and the shrine of Claudius, vowed to him by Agrippina, but swept away by his successor, was to be restored: at the same time the amusement of the citizens must not be neglected; and the erection of a great amphitheatre for the national spectacles, was a prudent indulgence to the passions of the populace. It was no doubt with reference to the manifold expenses by which he found himself beset, the arrears of the past, and the anticipations of the future, of which but a por-

¹ Tac. *Hist.* ii. 5.: "prorsus, si avaritia abesset, antiquis ducibus par."

² Among the incidental cares of a prince who arrived at power after the disorders of civil war, may be mentioned that of replacing the archives of the empire which had been lost in the sack of the Capitol. The most important documents of Roman history, senatorial decrees, resolutions of the people, treaties of peace and alliance, engraven on brazen tablets, had been stored up in that sacred receptacle, and were consumed in its conflagration. Vespasian caused them all to be re-engraved from the best sources within reach, and the collection he made amounted to 3000 pieces. Suet. *Vesp.* 8.

tion has here been indicated, that Vespasian is said to have declared, that the sum of forty millions of cesterces was required to maintain the commonwealth.¹

The inquisition of the censorship, extending to every part of the empire, was directed to settling the finances on a solid basis, and the arrangements above noticed were intended to balance the public revenues and expenditure. Besides bringing several new territories within the sphere of direct taxation, Vespasian revived various imposts which Galba in the first fervour of his triumph had abolished, and also added new ones. He enhanced the tributes of all the provinces, and, in some cases, even doubled them.² The Roman writers on land have left us some curious notices, showing how minute and searching was the assessment now made; and they add, that the measures for raising revenue on the strips of public domain still unassigned in Italy, but illegitimately occupied, caused commotions which could only be appeased by desisting from the attempt.³ Many trivial particulars of the Flavian finance are added by the historian, who could often see in the reason-

Vespasian's
parsimony un-
justly stigma-
tized.

¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 16.: "Summa ærarii fisciue inopia, de qua testificatus sit initio statim principatus, professus quadringenties millies opus esse ut respublica stare posset." This sum of 40,000 millions of sesterces, or 320 millions sterling, has been supposed by some writers to represent the annual revenue or expenditure of the state. Others, startled at the extravagance of this explanation, have proposed to alter *quadringenties* into *quadrages*; i. e. 400 millions, or 32 millions sterling. So violent a remedy is inadmissible; nor need we suppose that the sum represents the annual revenue of the state, which never probably came under one head at all. See the remarks made in chapter xxxii. of this work. Some of the wide conjectures which have been advanced, as to the amount of the imperial revenues, are collected in a note by Marquardt (Becker's *Handbuch*, iii. 2. 213.). Dureau de la Malle's solution corresponds with that I have proposed in the text. See *Econ. Pol. des Romains*, ii. 405. 435.

² Suet. *Vesp.* 16.

³ Frontinus, *de Colon.* ed. Goss. p. 146. Aggenus, *de Controv. Agrorum*: Hyginus, *de Gener. Controv.* in *Script. Rei Agrar.* ed. Lachmann, pp. 81. 133. See Dureau de la Malle, ii. 436. Laboulaye, *Droit foncière*, 71. Marquardt (Becker's *Handb.*, iii. 1. 339.).

able policy of the most honest of the Cæsars nothing but the petty parsimony of a sordid mind. Vespasian is accused of making small gains by speculations; of selling offices to candidates and pardons to criminals; of advancing the most rapacious prefects to the most opulent prefectures, that they might have more to disgorge when it suited him to condemn them for extortion; finally, of inventing new and even disgusting objects of taxation, and defending himself, according to the well-known anecdote, by remarking that the coin smelt not less sweet from them.¹ Nevertheless, Suetonius himself bears witness to many instances of this prince's liberality towards *all classes of men*; to impoverished senators and consulars, to afflicted communities, and generally to the professors of the arts and sciences. It was remarked, as an instance of his consideration for deserving industry, that he rejected a proposal to move the materials for his buildings by improved machinery, declaring that *he must be suffered to feed his people*.²

The foundation of colonies had been, heretofore, the ordinary mode of paying off the discharged veterans of the civil wars, and though Vespasian does not seem to have made any new establishments of this kind, the number of older colonies he reconstituted shows that he followed the policy of his predecessors in relieving, by these means, his over-burdened finances. Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, Nola and Puteoli in the wealthiest region of Campania, Forum Populi, Reate, and other places in the districts round the capital, were thus recruited with a new stock; nor need we suppose that, as in the assignments of Octavius, the actual inhabitants were dispossessed for it. This is, perhaps, the first historical fact that confirms what the poets had already indicated, the decrease of population even in the heart of Italy.³ But the censors must have revealed the token of

Foundation of colonies.

¹ Suet. l. c. Dion, lxi. 14.

² Suet. *Vespas.* 18.: "præfatus, sineret se plebeculam pascere."

³ Nero, indeed, had in the same manner restored Antium and Tarentum. Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 27.

this ominous movement to the emperor, and thrown a gloom over his prudent efforts to restore the finances.¹

The colonist sheathed his sword when he put his hand to the plough, and the establishment of colonies was understood as a pledge of the restoration of peace. Among the architectural works with which Vespasian now decorated the city, one of the most prominent was the forum with which he extended the line of cloistered areas thrown open by Julius and Augustus. The great fire had cleared a site for these new constructions at the back of the Roman forum. As the works of his great predecessors had been illustrated by the shrines of Venus and Mars, so the colonnades of Vespasian were arranged to embrace the new temple of Peace, a bold personification of the aspirations of the age, unknown to the Grecian Olympus. This temple, which seems to have been of unusual size and splendour, was embellished with the spoils of the Jewish war, and works of art from other countries of the East.² He completed the design with a basilica, in which he invited the learned of all professions to meet, and conduct their tranquil discussions.³

New forum and
temple of
Peace.

¹ Several places in the provinces may be added to the list of Vespasian's colonies; Aventicum in Gaul, Flaviobriga in Spain, Develtus, Siscia and Flaviopolis in Thrace, Cæsarea in Samaria, and another Flaviopolis, already mentioned, in Cilicia. Comp. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* iv. 18. 31. 34., and inscriptions. Tyre, Paphos, Salamis, and other places in the East, seem to have received favours from Vespasian or Titus, which they acknowledged by commemorating the auspicious year, *ἔτος νεὸν ἡρεῶν*, on their coins. Of Tyre, Q. Curtius, whose work has been generally assigned to this period, says (iv. 4.): "multis ergo casibus defuncta, et post excidium renata, nunc tamen longa pace cuncta refovente, sub tutela Romanæ mansuetudinis acquiescit." But from the same passage Niebuhr argues that the writer lived in the time of Severus. Comp. Herodian, iii. 9. 10. Ulpian, in the *Digest*, l. 15. 1.

² Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 5. 7. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 36, xxxvi. 24. Herodian, i. 44. A picture of the battle of Issus, by an artist of Alexandria, was removed by Vespasian and suspended in the temple of Peace. Ptolemæus apud Phot. (Sharpe's *Hist. of Egypt*, i. 307.). Here also were placed several works of art which Nero had seized in the provinces for the decoration of his Golden House. Plin. *H. N.* xxxiv. 19. 24.

³ Gellius, v. 21., xvi. 8. Galen. *de Comp. Medic.* i. See Reimar's note on

Augustus had endowed the literature of this time with the collection of the Palatine library. Vespasian not only founded a library in his forum, but was the first of the Roman sovereigns to institute a salaried hierarchy of teachers. Au-

gustus in a simpler and more generous age had stimulated genius by personal condescension: but the Flavian era could not appreciate the delicacy of the Augustan, and Vespasian could find no happier means of patronizing letters than by handsome wages paid quarterly. Destitute himself of learning and polite accomplishments, he cannot have been instigated to this indulgence by any just appreciation of the claims of literary merit.¹ Nevertheless, the measure he adopted was systematic, munificent, and permanent. Not only did he confer presents or pensions upon poets and artists, but to the rhetoricians and grammarians, both Greek and Latin, in the provinces as well as in the city, he assigned an annual payment, varying in regular gradations, but amounting ordinarily to a liberal stipend, in addition to their pupils' fees.² For such extensive liberality, so new to the policy of Rome, there must have been a strong public motive. Amidst all the brilliancy of the late reigns, the solid education of the

Dion, lxi. 15. Upon the locality of this temple the topographers are now agreed. For a long time the great ruins which bear the name of Constantine were mistaken for it.

¹ Aurelius Victor notices as an important fact, that hitherto all the emperors from Augustus, and particularly the five who were of Cæsarean blood, were men of literary accomplishments: *Epit.* 8. "adeo literis culti atque eloquentia fuere ut, ni cunctis vitiis, absque Augusto, nimii forent, profecto texissent modica flagitia."

² Suet. *Vesp.* 18.: "ingenia et artes vel maxime fovit: primus e fisco Latinis Græcisque rhetoribus annua centena (800*l.*) constituit." See farther Schmidt, "*Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im 1sten Jahrhundert*," p. 440 foll. The rhetoricians included the sophists or philosophers. Vespasian extended his liberality occasionally to poets and artists: "præstantissimos poetas, necnon et artifices, Core Veneris, item Collossi refectorem, insigni congiario donavit." He made a present of 500,000 sesterces (4000*l.*) to Saleius Bassus, the "tenuis Saleius" of Juvenal. Tacitus *Dial. de Orat.* 9., who calls this liberality "mira et examia."

upper ranks, in the alarm or reckless profusion of the times, had been grievously neglected, and the encouragement given by Nero to trivial accomplishments had weakened the foundation of the Roman character. The new system may be interpreted as an attempt to restore the tone of society, to infuse into the national mind healthier sentiments and aspirations, in harmony with its sobered view of material enjoyments. At the same time the emperor was not blind to the importance of attaching the Roman youth to his government, and gaining the direction of their thoughts. Hence, perhaps, the jealousy and aversion with which the new mode of public instruction was regarded by such a writer as Tacitus, the depository of pre-imperial traditions. It was not the publicity of education itself, but the influence assumed over it by the government, that really excited the odium of the old aristocracy. They felt, too, that the professors, the men of phrases and arguments, would soon work their way into the place of governors and magistrates, and supplant the proud but indolent magnates in their immemorial privileges. The rhetorician might be raised to the consul's seat or the consul might descend to the rhetorician's: either alternative was equally distasteful to the adherents of antique prejudice and custom. Quintilian, the teacher of youth and private tutor in the palace, was perhaps the first pedagogue that obtained the consular ornaments; but his class retained to the last the advantages they now acquired, and continued to scale the heights of office from the modest but convenient elevation of the professor's chair. Moreover the grammarians were for the most part philosophers, and the teachers of wisdom and morality, the avowed critics of political authority, were soothed by the same measures which converted the professors of literature into instruments of government. A lasting alliance was effected between the preachers of ethics and the guardians of the public peace, the absence of which had caused many collisions in the reigns of earlier emperors. At Rome, at Athens, at Antioch, and other centres of intellectual activity, ideas were generally enlisted on the side of govern-

ment. The experiment of the Greek sovereigns of Egypt was applied with like results throughout the empire. At Alexandria Vespasian had observed and meditated on the policy of the Ptolemies: he appreciated the caresses and flatteries he there received from grammarians and sophists; and possibly the consciousness of his own deficiency in the learning of the schools enhanced his notion of its political importance.

The alliance, I have said, was durable, but its effect was not immediately complete. Philosophy, during the last century, had been a school of political opposition; and though the common voice of the unlettered populace hailed the Flavian empire as a blessing, the men of ideas and theories refused, at least for one generation, to descend from the heights of their impracticable dogmatism, and acknowledge the sovereignty of a mild autocrat as the sole refuge from anarchy and barbarism. The temple of Peace was consecrated in the year 828; but the alliance it was intended to cement between the prince and the philosophers was quickly broken by intrigues against the chief of the state, which could be too surely traced to men of character and influence. Curiatius Maternus, a distinguished orator, the favourite of the old aristocracy, excited the jealousy of Vespasian's government, mild and liberal though it professed itself, by the freedom of his tragedies on Roman subjects, in which he painted the fall of liberty. In a later reign this eccentricity seems to have proved fatal to him.¹ Helvidius Priscus, a man of higher fame, whose intemperate opposition has already been noticed, continued to murmur at the conduct of affairs; but in the absence of details we can only acquiesce in Dion's judgment on his principles. He indulged in vain and aimless allusions to liberty

¹ Maternus is one of the principal characters in the dialogue *de Oratoribus*, ascribed to Tacitus. See capp. 2. 3. 11. 13. Besides a *Medea* and a *Thyestes*, he wrote a *Domitius* and a *Cato*. Some critics hold him to be the author of the *Octavia* which goes under the name of Seneca. He is supposed to be the Maternus put to death by Domitian: Dion, lxxvii. 12.

and the free state, shades of the past to which no public man pretended to give a substance, fancying that on him had descended the mantle of his father-in-law, the reserved and prudent Thræsea, who, on the contrary, while he withdrew from political life under the tyranny of Nero, professed no violent opposition, nor would ever have balanced a visionary republic against the wise and legitimate principate of Vespasian.¹ It is the penalty of power that inferior minds cannot discriminate between tyranny and just authority, and are more likely to revolt against an indulgent prince than an unscrupulous despot. Helvidius indeed was exasperated against the emperor by a private grudge, and the penalty he at last paid was due to his perverse malignity. Vespasian long bore with this unprincipled opposition, which distressed and mortified him. He knew himself to be the object of many conspiracies, encouraged if not actually fostered by the murmurs of such orators as Helvidius. He was engaged on a great experiment in maintaining just and equitable government. The threat he once pronounced after listening to a petulant harangue, *Either my son shall succeed me or I will have no successor*, implying that if his dynasty was rejected, the state would be left without a chief at all, was received with a shudder by thousands who felt that the empire was a state necessity.² It was to protect the state no less than himself that he procured a decree for Helvidius's exile, and followed it with an order

Exile and
death of Hel-
vidius.

¹ Such at least was the conduct of Thræsea as depicted by Tacitus. Dion obscures at first the real difference between the two: 'Ελονίδιος . . . τὴν τοῦ Θρασέου παρρησίαν οὐ σὺν καιρῷ μιμούμενος: though in the fragment which seems to be rightly appended to this chapter, he plainly contradicts himself, adding: ἦν γὰρ τοῦ Θρασέου γαμβρὸς καὶ ζηλοῦν αὐτὸν ἐπλάττετο. πολλὸν δ' αὐτοῦ ἠμάρτανε. Θρασέας μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ Νερωνος ὢν οὐκ ἠρέσκειτο αὐτῷ, καὶ οὐδὲν μὲν οἱ οὐδ' ὡς ὑβριστικὸν ἔλεγεν ἐς αὐτὸν, οὐδὲ ἐπραττεν . . . οὗτος δὲ Οὐεσπασιανῶ ἤχθετο, καὶ οὐτ' ἰδίᾳ οὔτε ἐν τῷ κοινῷ αὐτοῦ ἀπέειχετο. Dion, lvi. 15. Comp. Suet. Vesp. 15.

² Dion, l. c.: ἐμὲ μὲν νῦν διαδέξεται ἢ οὐδεὶς ἄλλος. It is possible, however, that the expression should be differently interpreted. Comp. Victor, Cæs. 9.: "Simul divinis deditus, quorum vera plerisque negotiis compererat, successores fidebat liberos Titum ac Domitianum fore."

for his death. This last command it seems he either did not mean to be executed, or at least speedily repented of, and would have withdrawn; but officious courtiers interposed to assure him that it was too late, and the victim had already suffered.¹ Helvidius was the only martyr the philosophers could claim. In no other case did the punishment of their agitation go farther than banishment. It was however with the full concurrence of public feeling that the emperor resolved to sweep from the city the whole sect of the Stoics and Cynics. Under the tyranny of Nero these men had been silent, even if they had not joined in the general chorus of adulation; but the indulgence of a milder system warmed them till they hissed and stung.² Vespasian took counsel with his old adviser Mucianus, who held the offenders in equal contempt with himself. It was determined to revive, for the immediate safety of the state, the obsolete enactments of the republic, which had prosecuted the philosophers for the remotest tendencies ascribed to their teaching. All professors of the obnoxious dogmas were required to leave the city; two of the most noted, Hostilius and the Cynic Demetrius, were deported to islands. Secure of their lives, both these men persisted to the last in virulent invectives against the government. But Vespasian's temper was proof against this provocation. *I will not kill*, he said, *a dog that barks at me.*³ A special

Banishment of
the Stoics and
Cynics.

¹ The precise act which gave occasion to this order is not mentioned, nor in what judicial form it was given. Dion: καὶ πολλὰ πράττων ἐμελλέ ποτε δίκην αὐτῶν δώσειν. Suet.: "relegatum primo, deinde et interfici jussum." Comp. Plin. *Ep.* iii. 11. Tac. *Agric.* 45.: "nostræ duxere Helvidium in carcerem manus."

² The character of this opposition is shown in the anecdotes mentioned by Epictetus, *Dissert.* i. 1. 2. The Scholiast on Juvenal, iv. 53., gives an account of a certain Palfurius, which shows how philosophy, especially that of the Porch, was the refuge of the discontented personages whom the emperors had degraded for their vices. The repeated sneers of Juvenal at the Stoics and Cynics betray the popular feeling regarding them at the beginning of the second century.

³ Dion, lxi. 13. Suet. *Vesp.* 16.

grace was accorded to Musonius Rufus, who seems to have been honest and temperate. He was excepted by name from the common proscription. Whatever might be his political theories, he knew that the free state was impossible, and refrained from flattering the illusions of a frivolous fanaticism.¹

Nero's golden house had risen like an exhalation, and like an exhalation it disappeared. The masses of building that projected forward from the Palatine, and connected the mansions of the earlier Cæsars with the Esquiline and the Cælian, were entirely swept away.² The colossus alone, which had stood in the entrance of the palace from the Velia, was allowed to remain erect; it is not quite certain, however, whether it was removed from its place at this period. The head indeed of Nero was stricken off, and that of Titus substituted for it. The contrast might have provoked a smile, had the homely features of the elder Flavius replaced the divine beauty of the Roman Apollo. On the ridge of the Velia, at the summit of the Sacred Way, were laid the foundations of a triumphal arch, which was completed in the next reign, to commemorate the conquest of Judea. The palatial buildings, commenced by Nero, on the Esquiline, after being occupied for a time by Titus, were demolished, or converted by a rapid but complete transformation, into public baths. Our antiquaries can even now trace in the manner of their construction the precipitation with which the change was effected; the chambers of the thermæ being erected on the basement of the previous edifice, which still

Demolition of
Nero's golden
house.

Erection of
baths by Titus.

¹ When even Thræsea had peevishly exclaimed, "I had rather be killed to-day than banished to-morrow," Musonius reproved him in the best spirit of the Stoics. "Should you not rather try to acquiesce in whatever lot befalls you?" Epictet. *Dissert.* i. 1.

² Orosius, indeed, mentions the burning of the golden house among the disasters of Trajan's reign. I can hardly doubt that he is in error. The imperial residence was henceforth limited to the Palatine.

presents a remnant of Nero's original work.¹ The character of the great thermæ of the empire has already been described under the principate of Augustus; but the bath-life of the Romans had not then received its full development. Agrippa had accommodated the citizens by the erection of a multitude of baths in their streets; but these were diminutive in size and limited in their appliances. The same great benefactor had, however, constructed public baths in the Campus on a grander scale, adorned with halls and porticos, and the Pantheon itself may have been meant for a vestibule to a mass of buildings of proportionate grandeur. In the absence of any corroborative statement, we shall hardly assign such magnificence to the baths of Agrippa. They seem, however, to have been amplified and improved by Nero, by whose name they were afterwards known, and whether they escaped the great fires of their region, or were restored after conflagration, they lasted through the empire, and survived, indeed, the still grander creations of later builders.² There can be little doubt, however, that they were far outshone in size, in convenience, and in decoration by the baths of Titus, which were again surpassed by those of Caracalla, Diocletian, and Constantine. The erection of these palaces of the people marks an era in our history. It indicates the necessity which the government began to feel of strengthening its intrinsic weakness by pampering an indolent but restless multitude. The monuments of the Flavian and Antonine age show how much the emperors now leant upon their favour with the mass of the citizens, and how great were

¹ Suet. *Tit.* 7.: "Thermis celeriter exstructis." Martial. *de Spectac.* 2., indicates that the baths were erected on the site of Nero's palace or gardens:

"Hic ubi miramur velocia munera thermas,
Abstulerat miseris tecta superbus ager."

² The Thermæ Neronianæ are mentioned as in use by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Carm.* xxiii. 495.). The Aqua Virgo, which fed them, brought into the city over the Pincian hill by Agrippa, continues still to convey water to Rome. The other aqueducts which supplied the baths of the later emperors, had been cut off, or had fallen into disrepair, in the course of the fifth century.

the sacrifices they made to content and amuse them. The *Thermæ* of Titus comprised every convenience and every luxury for the residence by day of the The baths of Titus. great potentate, the mob of Rome. The provision of hot and cold water, of tanks and fountains, for washing, for bathing, and for steaming, was a part only of the luxurious appliances with which they were furnished. Partly under cover, and partly open to the air, they offered chambers or terraces for every enjoyment and every recreation. Presented to the populace without charge, for even the payment of the smallest copper coin which had been required under the republic was remitted under the empire, no tax whatever was put on the full enjoyment of their attractions. The private lodging of Caius or Titus might be a single gloomy chamber, propped against a temple or a noble mansion, in which he slept in contented celibacy; but while the sun was in the heavens he lounged in the halls of his Castle of Indolence; or if he wandered from them to the circus, the theatre, or the campus, he returned again from every place of occasional entertainment to *take his ease* in his baths.¹

After all, this club-life was monotonous and might become dull. Excitement was required to vary it, and the emperors found the means of excitement already Erection of the Colosseum. furnished by the institutions of an earlier age. It only remained for men, in their care for their clients' interests, to enhance these means and extend them. In vain

¹ To the passages of Seneca and Petronius, indicated in an earlier reference to the subject of the Roman baths (chap. xli.), the reader may add the 86th Epistle of Seneca, in which he contrasts their splendour and luxury in his day, with the squalor of those of the age of Scipio. But the author's style is too declamatory to command our unreserved reliance, and it is not easy to see where the rhetorician is describing the public baths, and where the private dissipation of voluptuous nobles and freedmen. The Christian writers, who denounced in the strongest terms the shows and theatres, do not seem to have preached against the baths, except as regarded the promiscuous bathing of the sexes, which, indeed, was forbidden by Hadrian. Spartian, *Hadr.* 18. See, however, one vigorous blow at them in Augustin: *de Catechiz. rudibus*, beginning: "quamvis insana gaudia non sint gaudia," &c.

had Cicero and Seneca expressed the sentiments of men of feeling in rebuking the horrid taste for the shows of the amphitheatre; statesmen and rulers were obliged still to feign an interest in them. Vespasian, though averse to shedding the blood of gladiators, exhibited combats of men with beasts. Titus, while pretending to the character of a philosopher, actually descended into the arena in his native town of Reate, and contended in a sham fight with the veteran, Cæcina.¹ But the accession of the Flavian dynasty was signalized by the erection of the most magnificent of the Roman amphitheatres, and this too was built within the limits of the vast Neronian palace, and probably with the spoils of that labyrinth of masonry. We have traced already the origin of the double theatre, the best adapted in form to the shows to which it was especially devoted. The noble edifice of Taurus had been consumed in the recent conflagration, and no other of the kind existed at this time at Rome; for one which Caius had commenced had been demolished by his successor.² Nero was satisfied with the longitudinal area of the circus, in which he could display his skill in charioteering; but the people were discontented, perhaps, at the interruption to their favourite entertainments, for which the circus, obstructed by the spina which ran down its middle, was little adapted. The tradition was still remembered that Augustus had designed the erection of such a building, not in the distant quarter of the Campus, but in the centre of the city; and had he executed his design, he would no doubt have created a work of imposing magnitude and splendour. This project it now remained for Vespasian to realize, and

¹ We have been often reminded of the disgust of all true Romans at the citizens, particularly if of birth and rank, who contended with the gladiators in the public shows; but we must remember that there was always one rule for the citizen at Rome, and another abroad, however high. Thræsea was not blamed for singing in a tragic drama at Patavium, nor Titus, we may believe, for pretending to fight in the arena at Reate. See Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 21. Dion, lxi. 15.

² Suet. *Calig.* 21.

every motive of policy urged him to outshine, in so popular an undertaking, the liberality of his greatest predecessor.¹ The spot he chose for the site was in the hollow between the Esquiline and Cælian, where Nero had excavated a fish-tank for his palace, perhaps the lowest level within the city walls; but the elevation to which the building attained overtopped the crests of the surrounding hills, and enabled it, in the words of a very sober poet, *almost* to look down upon the summit of the Capitol.² The three tiers of arches, divided by columns of the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian orders, rose one above the other; but the lowest story was thus inferior in height to either of those above it, which seems to detract very much from their architectural effect. A still worse defect perhaps is to be found in the lofty wall or screen of masonry, pierced only by few and narrow windows, which surmounts the light and airy arcades below. This upper tier is moreover the loftiest of the four, and the only motive I can imagine for the stilted height to which it is raised, is the necessity of giving a great elevation to the awning, which seems to have been drawn across the ample area, and which must have sunk considerably from its own weight in the middle.³

¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 9.: "fecit et nova opera, . . . amphitheatrum urbe media, ut destinasse compererat Augustum."

² Martial, *de Spect.* 2.:

"Hic ubi conspicui venerabilis amphitheatri
Erigitur moles, stagna Neronis erant."

Calpurn. *Eccl.* vii. 23.:

"Vidimus in cœlum trabibus spectacula textis,
Surgere, Tarpeium prope despectantia culmen."

³ The solidity of the masonry in the topmost story might be necessary for the support of the wooden framework to which the awning was attached. In the lines just quoted from Calpurnius, a writer reputed to be of the age of Domitian, we see an allusion to some sort of wooden scaffolding at the top of the building, and such a scaffolding is said to have been consumed in the fire which occurred in the reign of Macrinus. I am tempted to conjecture that such was the original construction, when the edifice was first opened by the Flavian emperors, and that it continued so to the date of the fire; the upper

The height of this celebrated structure, the cornice of which is still preserved throughout one third of its circuit, is said to be 160 feet: the major axis of its elliptical circumference measures 615, the minor 510 feet, while the length and breadth of the arena itself are respectively 281 and 176 feet. Rows of seats rise concentrically to the level of the upper story, the lowest row, or podium, being assigned to the senators, the vestals, and the emperor with his personal attendants. Eighty-seven thousand spectators were accommodated within the walls. The building was of the rich and warm travertine stone, or encrusted with marble; the most conspicuous parts shone with precious gems and metals; a gilded network protected the sitters in the lowest rows from the chance assaults of the animals beneath them, and the precaution was taken of making the topmost bar to turn on a swivel, so as to revolve at a slight touch, and baffle any attempt to climb by it.¹ We are naturally disappointed at the slight notices preserved of a work so magnificent, which was justly counted among the wonders of the Roman world, and which is invested in our eyes with a special interest as the scene of so many Christian martyrdoms. The eclogue of Calpurnius seems to point to a period when its consecration was still recent, and may belong to the age of the last Flavian emperor.² The name of Colosseum

story, as we now see it, being an addition when the amphitheatre was restored. Coins of Domitian, indeed, represent the building with its present architectural features. But if such was the original design, it is possible that it may not have been completed till the later date.

¹ Calpurn. *Eclog.* vii. 47.:

“Balteus en! gemmis en! illita porticus auro;
Sternitur adjunctis ebur admirabile truncis,
Et coit in rotulum, tereti qui lubricus axe
Impositos subita vertigine falleret ungues:” &c.

For a description of the shows of the amphitheatre, see Cassiodor. *Variar.* v. 42. Calpurnius notices only the combats of wild beasts.

² An attempt has been made by the recent editor Haupt, to place this author in the age of Nero. His arguments appear to me inconclusive. The seventh eclogue, describing the amphitheatre, ends with an allusion to the

popularly attached to it, and improperly written Coliseum, first occurs in the works of our countryman Bede in the seventh century. Its origin is not accurately known, and is referred by some to the gigantic size of the building, by others, with more probability, to the colossus of Nero, which was planted before its entrance. The name of Flavian was dropped perhaps on the fall of the dynasty by which it was raised, and the later designation may have come into use as early as the age of the Antonines.¹

The Colosseum far exceeds in its dimensions any similar structure of the ancient world; but from the specimens we possess of the Roman amphitheatre, we may conclude that it deviated little in construction from the approved models of the age. The name of the architect to whom so great a work was entrusted has not come down to us. The ancients themselves seem to have regarded this name as a matter of little interest; nor, in fact do they generally care to specify the authorship of their most illustrious buildings. The reason is obvious. The forms of ancient art, in this department, were almost wholly conventional, and the limits of design within which they were executed gave little room for the display of original taste and special character. The architect of the Parthenon or the Capitol was almost equally confined to the pattern of his own times. To a lesser extent we observe the same peculiarity in regard to our mediæval edifices, the designers of which, if in some cases recorded, are seldom put prominently forward, and

Reflections on
the Colosseum

emperor of the day, which seems to point much better to Domitian: "Et Martis vultus et Apollinis esse putavi." Comp. Statius, *Sylv.* v. l. 14.: "Cuique venit juncto mihi semper Apolline Cæsar:" and l. i. 18.

¹ For these details see Becker's *Röm. Alterthümer*, i. 682, and the other topographers. Nibby is said to have given the most complete description of the Colosseum, and his successors have borrowed from him and from one another. The measures given in the text are from the art. "*Amphitheatrum*" in Smith's *Dict. of Class. Antiquities*. Becker states them from Melchiori, at 157, 581, 481, 285, 182 respectively in Roman feet, which are to the English as 11·649 : 12. The number of spectators accommodated is ascertained from a statement in the *Notitia*.

have attained little celebrity. It is only in periods of ecclecticism and renaissance, when the taste of the architect has wider scope, and may lead the age instead of following it, that interest attaches to his personal merit. Thus it is that the Colosseum, the most conspicuous type of Roman civilization, the monument which divides the admiration of strangers in modern Rome with St. Peter's itself, is nameless and parentless, while every stage in the construction of the great Christian temple, the creation of a modern revival, is appropriated with jealous care to its special claimant. Yet if there be any value in posthumous celebrity, to be popularly known as the creator of an object which has filled the eyes and engaged the sympathies of sixty generations; which has been the familiar home of millions of our species, and has dwelt in the memories of millions more; in which the recollections of a dead antiquity have so long centred, and which has become the most visible of the links connecting the past with the present;—to be renowned as the creator of such an object should be a crown of ambition not less dazzling than the fame of excellence in history or epic.

The building of the Colosseum was the work of several years, nor was it completed and consecrated till after the death of its founder. The reign of Vespasian, extending over one decade, passed away in uneventful tranquillity, ruffled only for a moment, after the termination of the Jewish war, by one or two abortive attempts at usurpation, which were firmly quelled, but with no excessive or feverish violence. The character of this prince is sullied by no unnecessary severity, unless we must except the strange story, already related, of Sabinus and Eponina.¹ His administration was justly respected at home, and feared not less justly abroad. No Roman emperor laboured more assiduously in the path of honest,

Death of Vespasian,

A. D. 79.

A. U. 832.

¹ Victor says of him (*Epit.* 9.): "hujus inter cætera bona illud singulare fuit, inimicitias oblivisci; adeo ut Vitellii, hostis sui, filiam locupletissime dotatam splendidissimo conjungeret viro. Ferebat patienter amicorum motus," &c. *Comp. de Cæsar.* 9. init.

frugal, and yet liberal government: none kept the military establishments of the state on a more imposing footing, or maintained a firmer attitude of defence in the face of all its enemies. At the age of seventy, full of toils and honours, he was called at last to his rest by mere natural decay; but his death was perhaps accelerated by the immoderate use of the cold springs of Cutiliæ, in his native Sabine country.¹ During his illness, which was of some duration, he refused to relax in any degree from the routine of public business, and when obliged to keep his bed, insisted on the admission even of strangers to his presence. In the crisis of his disorder he demanded, possibly in an access of delirium, to be raised upright, exclaiming that an Emperor ought *to die standing*; a phrase which, whether truly ascribed to him or not, may fairly represent his character, as the soul of military discipline and official formality, armed with strong endurance and unflinching constancy.² Though we find it impossible to feel enthusiasm for the plebeian emperor, the head of the Flavian firm, we cannot part from Vespasian without avowing a higher regard for him than for any of the Cæsars before him, the great Julius, the universal exception, alone excepted.³

Vespasian, with admirable prudence, had admitted his

¹ Cutiliæ, on the Velinus near Reate: celebrated for its cold springs, Strab. v.; Plin. *H. N.* iii. 12., and for a floating island on its lake. Senec. *Nat. Quæst.* iii. 25.

² Suet. *Vesp.* 24. Dion, lxi. 17. Victor, *Epit.* 9.: "sanctus omnia." The reign of Vespasian extended from July 1, 822, the day of the salutation, to his death, June 23, 832. He had adopted the practice of holding the consulship regularly year after year, declining it once only during his residence at Rome.

³ Tacitus characterizes Vespasian coldly and harshly: "prorsus si avaritia abesset, antiquis ducibus par."—*Hist.* ii. 5. We have seen how necessary even parsimony might be to his position, and how nobly he redeemed it by justice and moderation. The same writer also speaks of him as the only emperor whose character was improved by the possession of power; which seems to be a sneer against his forced submission to Nero's tyranny. But again I must repeat that Tacitus too often makes himself the mouthpiece of senatorian prejudices.

son Titus, the darling of the army of Judea, to a share of the imperial power, on his return from the East. We have seen how large a share the younger prince took in the duties of the censorship, and we are assured that it was not as a designated successor, nor as a deputed vicegerent, that he was associated with his father in all the other functions of sovereign rule. The historian Dion declares accordingly that he cannot draw a line between the termination of the one reign and the commencement of the other; and I will follow him in continuing the thread of my narrative, also without interruption.¹ The younger Flavius was born at the end of the year which witnessed the assassination of Caius, and in consequence of the favour in which his father was held in the palace, he had been introduced as a child into the court of Claudius, and educated with the infant Britannicus.² An astrologer whom Narcissus had employed to cast the young prince's horoscope had ventured, it was said, to predict that Britannicus would never succeed to power, but that Titus, who was standing by, the son of a good officer now beginning to be noticed, would actually attain to it.³ We learn, on graver authority, that when Vespasian sent his eldest son to offer to Galba the devotion of the eastern legions, it was commonly surmised that the still youthful favourite of the army would be adopted by the old and childless emperor.⁴ Titus had now served with distinction both in Germany and Britain: his skill in martial exercises was equalled by his intellectual accomplishments; his conduct and prudence in affairs gave promise of a statesman and administrator, and his abilities were set off to advantage by the beauty of his figure and

¹ Dion, lxxvi. 17. Comp. Suet. *Tit.* 6.: neque ex eo destitit participem atque etiam tutorem imperii agere."

² Death of Caligula, Jan. 24, A. D. 41. Birth of Titus, Dec. 30, of the same year. Suet. *Tit.* 1.: "natus est tertio kal. Jan. insigni anno Caiana nece." Britannicus was born in 42.

³ Suet. *Tit.* 2., confirmed by an allusion in Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 1.: "præsaga responsa."

⁴ Suet. *Tit.* 5. Tac. *Hist.* ii. 1. Comp. Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iv. 9. 2.

countenance.¹ But beneath the reserved and measured blandness of the Roman popular chief, there was in Titus an impulsive enthusiasm, fostered by his connexion with the East, and warmed perhaps to a fervent glow by his romantic attachment to a Jewish princess. He was the lover and slave of Berenice, the sister of Agrippa; and when, on hearing of the movements in progress against Galba, he turned back from his journey westward and left his mission unfulfilled, it was surmised that his vacillation was the result of passion rather than of policy. He paused to visit the temple of the Paphian Venus. The goddess was worshipped on the spot where she emerged from the waters to rule mankind, not in the most exquisite of human forms, such as that revealed to her subjects by Apelles and Praxiteles, but under a rude and shapeless emblem, the meaning of which, for ages forgotten, had once perhaps been comprehended by Tyrian and Sidonian mariners. Here was an oracle still in high repute, and Titus consulted it about the success of his voyage to Syria. Receiving a favourable answer on this point, he was encouraged to inquire, still indirectly, about his political fortunes. The oracle was cautious, and veiled its reply in general conventionalities. But the priest then beckoned him into an inner chamber, and there disclosed without reserve the splendid destiny awaiting him. The promise of power was indeed a deathblow to love. The Roman chief was well aware that his countrymen would not suffer a Jewish concubine to usurp the place of Livia and Ag-

Relations of
Titus with
Berenice.

¹ Besides skill in music and versification, it is specially mentioned that Titus was a rapid short-hand writer, and had, moreover, a knack of imitating the writing of others, so that he used to say of himself in jest that he might have made an expert forger. Suet. *Tit.* 3. Victor. *Epit.* 10. For his personal beauty see Tac. *Hist.* ii. 1. v. 1., fully confirmed by busts and medals. For his eloquence see Pliny's preface; the whole tone of which assumes him to have been a man of literary accomplishments. Sil. Ital. iii. 603:

“Tum juvenis magno præcellens robore mentis
Excipiet patriam molem, celsusque feretur
Æquatum imperio tollens caput.”

rippina. But Titus accepted his fate. Venus in her own temple yielded the palm to her rival Juno.

The time, however, for this sacrifice had not yet arrived. The lover was first to be the instrument for the destruction of his mistress's city and nation. Our accounts represent an uncertainty and vacillation in the conduct of Titus before Jerusalem unlike anything we read of in other portions of Roman story. We call his treatment of the enemy barbarous, yet among the Romans, and possibly among the Jews themselves, it bore, as compared with many familiar examples, the character of unusual clemency. The anxiety he manifested, according to the testimony of Josephus, to spare the people, the city, and above all the temple of the Jews, strongly contrasts with the ruthless ferocity of other Roman conquerors. All history bears witness to the softness and almost feminine gentleness of his disposition, and even in the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, whether from superstition or from a tenderer feeling, Titus seems to have deserved the character thus ascribed to him.¹ The mild and yielding temper with which he is painted, appears again in the romance, for such it must be designated, on the life of Apollonius. The sophist is represented as conversing with him at Alexandria with the utmost freedom, giving him advice how to conduct himself in the government, recommending to him pedantic counsellors with all a pedant's assurance, and accepting with complacence the homage of the young philosopher on the steps of the throne.² Whatever may have

¹ When allowance is made for the exaggeration of which Josephus is convicted, it will appear that the severities of Titus towards the Jews, however frightful, fell far short of the ordinary atrocities of Roman warfare. The efforts he made to save the city, and at last the temple, were an exception to the general rule of destruction which had been carried out against Carthage, Syracuse, Corinth, and many less conspicuous capitals. But the Roman generals were often moved to tears. Thus Marcellus wept over Syracuse, Scipio Æmilianus over Carthage. Paulus Æmilius shed tears at the fate of Perseus. Liv. xxv. 24., xlv. 4. Polyb. xxxix. fragm. 2. Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son siècle*, ii. 288.: "Cet inconcevable mélange de pitié et d'inflexibilité est tout Romain."

² Philostratus *in vit. Apollon.* vi. 29, foll. vii. 8.

really been the influence of Apollonius over him, it would seem that Berenice retained his heart in complete subjection, though she could make no impression on his judgment. Titus the emperor obeyed the commands of public duty to the letter. He overthrew Jerusalem, dispersed the Jews, abolished their political nationality, and absorbed in the empire the realm once swayed by his mistress and her brother; but he still knelt as a lover at her feet, and after the fall of her country invited her to visit him at Rome, lodged her in the imperial palace, and acknowledged her publicly as his favourite. Wife, in the Roman sense, she could not be, yet to men in private stations at least, to men of all degrees anywhere outside the walls of Rome, the law allowed and society tolerated the possession of a foreign consort. The Romans winked at the irregular union between Vespasian himself and a Grecian concubine. But there was something peculiarly hateful to them in the character of the Egyptian, the Syrian, and above all perhaps at this period the Jewess; and when Titus appeared as associate emperor in the city, with Berenice by his side, their prejudices rose in arms against the scandal, and were not to be appeased without the complete sacrifice of the connexion. Titus gave way; the lovers reluctantly bade farewell; and Berenice returned desolately to her desolate country.¹ After the death of Vespasian she once more visited Rome hoping perhaps that her former admirer, now sole emperor, might exercise his independence in her favour. But Titus had learnt to control his inclinations effectually, and among the many proofs he gave of patriotism in the possession of power, was the firmness with which he rejected the blandishments of the foreign enchantress.²

¹ Suet. *Tit.* 7.: "dimisit invitus invitam." Dion seems to place this separation in 828, five years after Titus's return. The lady, born in 781, would then be 47 years of age. Perhaps we need not take Dion's date strictly, and the event may have occurred somewhat earlier.

² Dion, lxxi. 15, 18. Titus remained henceforth unmarried. In early life he had been united to Arriidia Tertulla, of an equestrian family, and on her death he had espoused Marcia Furnilla, who bore him a daughter, to whom he

The favour with which Titus was early regarded was manifested in many ways. The Romans specified with interest the spot where he had first seen the light, an obscure house in an obscure corner of the city, and they continued for a century later to point it out as a relic of ancient Rome which had escaped the fire of Nero, and the other fires that had since occurred.¹ They readily accepted as a fact the story, which can be shown by a comparison of dates to be groundless, that as a young man he had saved his father's life in battle with the Britons.² They believed that he had been present at the banquet at which Britannicus was poisoned, and had even tasted of the fatal cup, to which they ascribed his subsequent weakness of health and premature dissolution. The stories of dissipation in which he indulged after his return to Rome, and the scandal he brought on the austere manners of his family, elevated by merit to the first place among the citizens, might have caused little remark but for the severity with which he exercised the censorial office, and the hostility he excited among the knights and senators.³ At all events the nobler elements in his character must have become better known during his association in the empire, and the dislike in which he may at first have been held, was undoubtedly much mitigated before the death of his father.⁴ His succes-

Favour with which Titus was regarded by the Romans.

gave the imperial but ill-omened name of Julia. The date of this daughter's birth is undetermined, but it must be some years prior to her father's association in the empire, and the mother seems also to have died before it. Suet. *Domit.* 22.

¹ Suet. *Tit.* 1.

² Titus was born at the end of 794; see a preceding note. Vespasian's great campaign in Britain was in 797, and if he continued for some time longer in the island, he must have returned to Rome in 804, the year of his consulship, when Titus was not yet ten years of age. It is not likely, out of favour as he was with Agrippina, that Vespasian ever resumed a command in Britain.

³ Suet. *Tit.* 7.: "præter sævitiam suspecta in eo etiam luxuria erat . . . nec minus libido. . . . Suspecta et rapacitas . . . denique propalam alium Neronem et opinabantur et prædicabant."

⁴ Suet. *Tit.* 6.: "ut non temere quis tam adverso rumore, magisque invitis

sion might be accepted as inevitable, but had he been so extremely unpopular it would have been easy to insist on the association of his brother with him; or if Domitian were even more offensive, other measures might have been adopted to control his authority, and make him feel the precariousness of his power. But not a movement was made, not a murmur raised. Titus occupied the throne alone. Of his own free grace he declared his brother the partner of his empire, and signified that he would appoint him his successor; but he betrayed no jealousy of the nobles, no apprehension of their discontent, no uneasy consciousness of their dislike. The frankness with which he treated all classes of his subjects shows that he felt himself on terms of confidence with them. If their affection to him had ever wavered, he speedily recovered it, and maintained it without interruption to the end.

However this may be, the short biography we possess of this emperor is henceforth chiefly occupied with the praise of his goodness and liberality. His prosecution of the hateful race of delators was unrelenting.

Among the first victims of the Colosseum were the wretches who had been driven by their own necessities and those of the state, to inform against fiscal defaulters in the higher ranks. They were seized, bound, scourged in the amphitheatre, sold into slavery, or banished to the islands.¹ Titus took from no man, he gave to all profusely, he made a point of never sending a suitor away unsatisfied. *No man*, he said, in answer to a prudential

He combines
the suffrages
both of the no-
bles and the
populace.

omnibus, transierit ad principatum." There is some looseness in this last expression, and Suetonius may be confounding the association with the succession.

¹ Suet. *Tit.* 8. Titus legislated for the greater security of the subject against the informers. "*Vetuit de eadem re pluribus legibus agi*," i. e. the shifting the ground of action from one law to another, "*quærique de cujusquam defunctorum statu ultra certos annos*." The inheritance, for instance, of unmarried men fell under the Papian law to the treasury, and it was important in the interest of the government to ascertain the civil condition of the deceased.

remonstrance, *ought to leave the prince's presence disappointed.* Remembering one evening at supper that he had made no present to any one since the morning, *My friends,* he exclaimed, *I have lost this day.*¹ When certain nobles were detected conspiring against him, he not only pardoned, but treated them with peculiar kindness; and when they attended him in the amphitheatre, gave them the swords of the gladiators to feel their edges, thus putting his life unreservedly in their power.² Towards his people his demeanour was bland and affable. He insisted sometimes on abdicating the functions of umpire in the shows which he himself exhibited, and left it to them to determine their merits, contenting himself with the part of a private spectator. The features here delineated may be thought perhaps to represent the general type of a popular favourite. But the point to remark in them is the completeness with which they combine the champion of the nobles with the idol of the multitude. It was not easy to maintain the privileges and cherish the self-respect of the one class, and at the same time to humor the tastes and caprices of the other. Augustus had betrayed his weariness at the entertainments of the vulgar; Tiberius had shrunk from them altogether. Caius and Nero had abandoned themselves to the people, and forfeited the regard of the nobles; the attempts of Vespasian to conciliate both had been but imperfectly successful. Titus was the first who seems to have gained equal credit on either side; and we may thus account for the pre-eminent favour he enjoyed with his countrymen, which they declared by the title, extravagant as it may seem, of *Delight of the human race.*³

¹ Suet. l. c.: "Amici, diem perdidit;" a phrase which has obtained higher appreciation than it seems, when taken with the context, to deserve. It is repeated by Eutropius and Victor; the last writer calls it, "divinum et cœleste." See also Ausonius, *Gratiar. Act. in Gratianum Imp.*

² Suet. *Tit.* 9. Victor. *Epit.* 10. This story, which recurs again in the history of the next popular emperor, may be regarded as mythical.

³ Suet. *Tit.* 1.: "amor et deliciæ generis humani," a phrase repeated by Eutropius, vii. 14. Ausonius considers the defects of Vespasian a foil to the merits of his successor: "cujus nimia parsimonia et austeritas vix ferenda mirram fecerat filii lenitatem." *Gratiar. Act.* l. c.

Titus was beloved by the Romans, and those the Romans loved ever died young. Fate indeed did not always require that they should suffer; but the career of Titus was not only brief, but clouded in its latter years Disasters of the reign of Titus. by a series of public disasters. The city was visited, in the first place, by a terrible conflagration, which raged unchecked for three days, and was second only in extent to that, hardly yet repaired, of Nero. The Capitol itself fell once more a prey to the flames.¹ Again Rome suffered from a pestilence, in which, if we may Fire at Rome, and pestilence. credit the statement of a late authority, ten thousand persons perished daily for some time together.² The great eruption of Vesuvius, which overwhelmed the cities of Campania, was perhaps more alarming, though the loss it inflicted might be much less considerable. The incident, as is well known, has been described to us in some detail, and it will be interesting to dwell upon it before we close the brief annals of this reign. A less popular prince might have been accused of himself setting fire to the city, and even the eruption and the pestilence might have been imputed to the divine vengeance on his crimes. But in this case the Romans were willing to charge the national sufferings on national sins. The wrath of the gods required no doubt a signal expiation, and the dedication of the Colosseum gave room for the display of pious magnificence on a scale hitherto unrivalled. A battle of cranes with dwarfs representing the Pigmies was Dedication of the Colosseum. a fanciful novelty, and might afford diversion for

¹ Suet. *Ti.* 8. Dion, lxi. 24. Originating, apparently, in the outskirts of the Campus Martius, this fire injured, rather than consumed, the Pantheon, and several circumjacent buildings. It then took a southerly direction, to follow the order of the names as given by Dion, attacking the Diribitorium, the theatres of Balbus and Pompeius, the portico of Octavia, and finally the Capitol. The S. W. summit of the Capitoline hill, on which, as I believe, the temple stood, immediately overlooked the "Octavian edifices," and would thus fall exactly within the line of the conflagration.

² This extravagant statement is given in the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, who, however, places it under the reign of Vespasian. Suspicion always attaches to the Christian accounts of Pagan calamities.

a moment; there were combats of gladiators, among whom women were included, though no noble matron was allowed to mingle in the fray; and the capacity of the vast edifice was tested by the slaughter of five thousand animals within its circuit. The show was crowned with the immission of water into the arena, and with a sea fight representing the contest of the Corinthians and Coreyræans related by Thucydides. From the amphitheatre the spectators were invited to the Naumachia of Augustus, which seems to have afforded more room for naval evolutions, and here the siege of Syracuse by the Athenians was still more vividly portrayed. These exhibitions endured through a hundred days, and terminated in a scramble for tickets entitling the gainer to rations of bread, pork, and other eatables. The generosity of the most amiable of princes was the theme of every tongue, and the echoes of his praises still live in the meagre records of the time which have preserved so little besides. When indeed all was over, Titus himself was seen to weep, perhaps from fatigue, possibly from disgust and vexation; but his tears were interpreted as a presentiment of his death, which was now impending, and it is probable that he was already suffering from a decline of bodily strength. His health had been long feeble. He had tried in vain all the remedies suggested by the physicians, and afterwards by the priests. With superstitious feelings kindled at the Eastern altars, he sought to propitiate heaven by strange rites and sacrifices. His constitution, perhaps always delicate, possibly injured by poison imbibed in early life, was said to be weakened by the immoderate use of warm baths; but in the last stage of his disorder he desired to be conveyed to the Cutilian springs, where his father had sought to reinvigorate his old age. Titus lamented effeminately the premature decease he too surely anticipated; and opening the curtains of his litter, *looked wistfully at the heavens, exclaiming that he did not deserve to die.*¹ He expired on the 13th of September, 81, having not quite completed his

Death of Titus.

A. D. 81.

A. U. 834.

¹ Suet. *Tit.* 10. : "eripi sibi vitam immerenti "

fortieth year. During the course of his short reign of two years and two months, counting from the death of Vespasian, he had religiously observed the principle which he had proclaimed on accepting the chief priesthood, that the hands of the gods' first minister should be kept free from any stain of blood.¹ No senator, no citizen fell by his orders. The Romans generously affirmed that he had committed no crime, and had discharged every duty. When he declared on his deathbed that there was but one thing of which he repented, they surmised that he was anxious about the fate of his countrymen under the sway of his brother, and accused himself of weakness in refraining from the punishment of Domitian's repeated intrigues against his life. Such are the soft and gentle traits that predominate to the last in this prince's character, a temper which may seem amiable at the outset of an imperial career, and raise hopes in the inexperienced; but which must be regarded with distrust and even with apprehension by those who have learnt the lessons of history. Titus inherited from his prudent parent a stable throne and a full treasury: had he lived to exhaust the treasury,—and his brief career was wantonly improvident,—he would soon have found his throne shaken, and been driven to acts of repression and tyranny which would have blackened his fame with posterity. It would be harsh on a mere guess at future possibilities, to liken him to Nero, from whom he differed, as we have seen, in many essential features; nevertheless we may accede to the judgment which was finally passed on him by his countrymen, and which settled into a maxim with later ages, that he was fortunate in the briefness of his power.²

The virtuous character which the Romans agreed to as-

¹ Suet. *Tit.* 9.: "peritulum se potius quam perditulum affirmans." Various conflicting reports of the cause and manner of this prince's death are given by Suetonius, Dion, Plutarch, Victor, Eusebius, and others, and are collected by Reimar in a note to Dion, *lxi.* 26.

² Ausonius, *Ordo Imperat.*: "Titus imperii felix brevitate." Comp. Dion, *lxi.* 18.: τὰχα ἂν ἐλεγχθεῖς εἰγὲ ἐπὶ μακρόν ἐβεβιώκει ὅτι εὐτυχία πλείονι ἢ ἀρέτῃ ἐχρήσατο.

cribe to Titus has not been impugned by the compilers of Christian tradition. The conqueror of Jerusalem had learnt perhaps from his intercourse with the Eastern spiritualists to regard with religious awe the great events in which he had borne a part, and to conceive of himself as of a special minister of the divine judgments. As such he was hailed without hesitation by the historian Orosius, who expounds the course of Providence in Roman affairs from the point of view of the Christians.¹ The closing of Janus on the fall of the Jewish city, appears to this writer a counterpart to the announcement of universal peace at the birth of Jesus. He passes lightly over the calamities of Titus's reign, the fire, the pestilence, and the volcanic eruptions, as well as his premature decease, all which had he lifted a hand against the Christians, would have been branded as manifest tokens of divine vengeance.² But with the Jews it was far otherwise. By them the memory of the Flavian princes was naturally held in the deepest abhorrence.

View of Titus's character taken by the Christians and the Jews.

They asserted that Vespasian commenced a cruel persecution of the presumed lineage of the royal David. The disasters of the doomed principate of Titus they regarded with grim exultation. They gloated

Jewish legend on the death of Titus.

¹ Though we may smile at the confidence with which Orosius has judged the divine decrees, we must signalize him as the first secular historian who directed men's views to the providential guidance of human history, an inevitable subject of Christian speculation, however hazardous, of which we may say, like the science of the mathematici, "et vetabitur semper et retinebitur."

² Oros. vii. 9. Comp. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 12. 17. A late Christian historian, of inferior authority, Sulpicius Severus, asserts that Titus was induced to destroy the Temple, from the idea that it was the centre and stronghold of the Christian faith, *Hist. Sacr.* ii. 44.; and it has been attempted to show that this writer took his information from the lost narrative of Tacitus. Some of the phrases of Sulpicius may, indeed, remind us of the style of Tacitus: "At contra alii et Titus ipse evertendum templum imprimis censebant: quo plenius Judæorum et Christianorum religio tolleretur. Quippe has religiones, licet contrarias sibi, iisdem tamen auctoribus profectas; Christianos ex Judæis extitisse; *radice sublata stirpem facile perituram*," &c. But Sulpicius is a manifest imitator, and we need not infer from such an apparent resemblance that he actually copied the words of Tacitus

over his shattered health, which they attributed to divine vengeance, and inserted among their legends a wild account of the nature of his sufferings. The conqueror of Jerusalem, they said, had desecrated the Temple of the Most High with orgies suited to the shrine of the Paphian Venus. He had pierced the veil with his sword, before tearing it down to wrap the sacred vessels, and transport them to Rome. Assailed on his voyage homeward, and nigh to perishing by tempest, he had impiously exclaimed, *The god of the Jews who drowned Pharaoh has power on the waters, but I am more than his match on land.* Jehovah suffered him to gain the shore, and there, in scorn of the scorner, sent a gnat to creep into his nostrils and lodge itself in his brain. For seven years the restless insect gnawed the vital tissue. One day, when the tortured prince passed by a blacksmith's forge, the thunders of the hammer seemed to startle and arrest it. Four pieces of silver daily did the sufferer give to have the noise continued in his ear without ceasing. At the end of thirty miserable days the insect became accustomed to the clang and resumed his ravages. Phineas, the son of Erouba, was present with the chief nobles of Rome at the death of the emperor. The Jewish witness reported that the head of the deceased was opened, and the creature was there discovered as big as a swallow, with a brazen beak and claws of iron.¹

Thus it is that the disappearance from the stage of life of a weak, though perhaps a pleasing unit in the great sum, may be recorded by many pens, remembered through many generations, attended with sighs or sneers of millions, if fortune has placed it in a conspicuous position. Almost at the same moment, whole hives of human beings, historic cities, monuments of the arts of ages, may subside into annihilation, and pass, almost without notice, into the night of oblivion. Herculaneum and Pompeii vanished from before the eyes of Italy, like the scenes of a theatre, and their awful disappearance, strange to say, at-

Destruction of
Herculaneum
and Pompeii.

¹ Salvador, from the Talmud : *Domin. Rom. en Judée*, ii. 498.

tracted hardly a more lasting interest. Yet, the disaster itself was one of the most signal in human annals, and is connected with circumstances which have been related for us in a picturesque and striking manner, and have engaged the sympathies of many readers through a long succession of ages. The same eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed the cities of Campania, scorched and stifled the great naturalist Pliny, and the account of the catastrophe is minutely detailed by the most elegant writer of the day, himself partly an eye-witness.

We have learnt from moralists the habit of contrasting the works of art and nature, as types of the perishable and the eternal. Yet in some respects, and under certain conditions, the outward framework of nature is not less liable to change and dissolution than that of more human creations. In the Colosseum, as it now stands before us, broken down through one half of its circumference, and at one spot almost levelled to the ground, its columns and architraves ruined or defaced, its surface ruffled with the scars of time, or the rank foliage of a wild vegetation, we behold no more than the wreck of the glorious amphitheatre which rose in complete majesty before the gaze of Vespasian and Pliny. But if we turn our eyes to the great features of the Bay of Naples, its shores, its plains, and its central mountain, we may remark that the destruction of two considerable cities was one of the least of the changes effected in the scene, by the revival of volcanic agency which dates from this period, in the region of Vesuvius. This mountain had been the greatest of nature's amphitheatres; the ridge of its truncated cone was level, like the cornice of the Colosseum; its sides, steep and even, were adorned with the fairest of nature's handy work, with forests of oak, chestnut, and ilex on the north, with vines, cultivated or growing wild to its summit, on the south.¹ The interior

Changes in the physical aspect of Vesuvius and the Campanian coast.

¹ Strabo (v. 4. p. 247.) describes the fertility of the slope up to its summit: τὸ ὄρος τὸ Οὐέσσοιον, ἀγροῖς περιουκόμενον παγκάλους, πλὴν τῆς κορυφῆς· αὐτὴ δ' ἐπίπεδος μὲν πολὺν μέρος ἐστίν. The forest trees of the region have been

of the summit was more or less depressed, and the masses of igneous formation, and broken furrows which scarred or seamed it, betokened to thoughtful observers that it was the choked-up crater of a volcano extinct for ages.¹ The eruption of the year 79 effected, possibly at one blow, the ruin of this amphitheatre, such as it has taken centuries to accomplish in the Flavian Colosseum. One half of its sides have been completely blown away; the remainder has been abraded and lowered almost throughout; the apex alone, now known by the name of Monte di Somma, may still show the level of the original crater. But from the floor of this amphitheatre has risen another cone, which has almost filled it with its accumulating débris, and has at times exceeded the height of Somma; much as if a larger pyramid than that of Cestius had been piled on the arena of the Colosseum.² From this cone torrents of molten rocks, and showers of burning cinders, have been for ages ejected, and the luxuriant vegetation of the mountain slopes has been consumed or buried for many hundred feet from the summit.

The peaceful charms of Vesuvius, such as they appeared to the eyes of Virgil and Tiberius, have been transformed to terrible majesty, and the long swelling outline of the fertile

found to spring abundantly, at least on the northern side, whenever the mountain has been long at rest, as before the eruption of 1611; but Martial celebrates its vineyards in his time, iv. 43.: "Hic est pampineis viridis modo Vesuvius umbris," and the followers of Spartacus escaped from the crater by ropes of twisted wild-vines. Plutarch, *Crass.* 10.

¹ Strabo, l. c.; whose description, however, does not favour the idea of a deep crater at that period, nor indeed does Plutarch's account imply it, though often cited with that view. Vitruvius, in the time of Augustus, recognises the tradition of Vesuvius as a volcano, ii. 6.: "non minus etiam memoretur antiquitus crevisse ardores et abundavisse sub Vesuvio monte, et inde evomuisse circa agros flammam." Comp. Diodor. Sic. iv. 21.

² Monte di Somma is 3450 (French) feet high. The cone, which is known by the name of Vesuvius, has been recently 3700, and at one time is said to have exceeded 4000. It was reduced by the eruption of 1855 to a level with the rival summit, and it has been stated by eye-witnesses of the agitation of 1861, that it has now sunk a little below it. Every year, in fact, in modern times, has produced more or less change in the features of the mountain.

hill has been broken by frowning cliffs and jagged pinnacles.¹ Nor are the changes produced on the plain and along the coast-line less signal than the transformation of the ancient mountain. The Lucrine lake has been choked by the uplifting of a mighty cone from its abysses. The foundations of the mole of Puteoli have been sunk many feet into the sea, and raised again, though not to their original level. Various remains of Roman buildings, and lines of road along the shore, may be now spied beneath the waters; while on the other hand long strands of shingle have been heaved above the surface, at the foot of hills which the action of the waves had once scarped into precipitous cliffs. There has been in fact first a subsidence, and again a raising of the whole coast; but the distance at which the ruins of Pompeii now lie from the sea which once washed its walls, is attributed not so much to a change of the relative levels of land and water, as to the accretion of volcanic matter from Vesuvius. Pompeii itself is covered with a mass of ashes long since converted into mould, and rife with the seeds of vegetation, to the depth of about fifteen feet; but Herculaneum after suffering a like catastrophe has since been more than once overwhelmed by streams of lava, which have gained a thickness of more than twice as many yards. From such data we may imagine how entirely the face of the country has been changed along the southern base of the mountain which has been so great an agent of destruction and renovation.²

¹ The date of the *Argonautica* and *Punica* may be determined from allusions to fatal activity of Vesuvius. Valer. Fl. iii. 208.: "mugitor anhelat Vesvius;" iv. 507.: "Sic ubi prorupti tonuit cum forte Vesevi Hesperiae letalis apex." Silius Ital. xvii. 594.: "Evomuit pastos per sæcula Vesvius ignes." Statius recurs more than once to the subject, which was peculiarly interesting to him as a native of Neapolis. See *Sylv.* iv. 4. 78., iv. 8. 4., v. 3. 205.

² There is something affecting in the delight with which Pliny describes the charms of the Campanian coast on which he was so soon to perish in a general catastrophe. See *Hist. Nat.* iii. 9.: "hinc felix illa Campania est. Ab hoc sinu incipiunt vitiferi colles et temulentia nobilis succo per omnes terras inclyto . . . hæc litora calidis fontibus rigantur . . . et hoc quoque certamen humanæ voluptatis tenuere Osci, Græci," &c.

Sixteen years before the date of this fatal eruption, the populous town of Pompeii had been afflicted with a terrible earthquake; but the language both of Tacitus and Seneca, who speak of it as swallowed up or destroyed, is plainly exaggerated. The remains discovered in modern times attest the fact of a convulsion which had overturned some of the principal buildings; but all the ordinary habitations of the people were standing, and the place was as full of residents as ever, engaged in their usual concerns, when the final catastrophe overtook it.¹ Pompeii was a maritime city at the mouth of the river Sarnus, the most sheltered recess of the Neapolitan Crater. Its origin was lost in antiquity, and the tradition that it was founded by Hercules, together with the other spot which bore the name of the demigod, was derived perhaps from the warm springs with which the region abounded. The Greek plantations on the Campanian coast had been overrun by the Oscans and Samnites; nevertheless the graceful features of Grecian civilization were still everywhere conspicuous, and though Pompei received a Latin name, and though Sulla, Augustus, and Nero had successively endowed it with Roman colonists, it retained the manners and to a great extent the language of the settlers from beyond the sea.² The accident which buried this provincial city under

Pompeii afflicted with an earthquake.

A. D. 63.

¹ There is a discrepancy of one year in the date of the earthquake in Seneca and Tacitus. The first, who was a contemporary, places it in the consulship of Regulus and Virginus (U. C. 816. A. D. 63.); the other, writing six years later, assigns it to the year before. We may admit with Brotier the possibility of the shocks having commenced in the one year and terminated in the next. Seneca, however, with extraordinary coolness, speaks of the entire subsidence of the city: "Pompeios celebrem Campaniæ urbem, . . . desedissee terræ motu, Lucili virorum optime, audivimus."—*Nat. Quæst.* vi. 1. Tacitus less strongly: "et motu terræ celebre Campaniæ oppidum, Pompeii, magna ex parte proruit."—*Ann.* xv. 22. In the *Hist.* i. 2.: "haustæ aut obrutæ urbes:" in the one case, swallowed up in streams of lava; in the other overwhelmed by showers of ashes.

² The style of building at Pompeii is essentially Greek, but such as the Romans at this time adopted whenever an opportunity occurred; on the other

a mass of cinders, and preserved its basement at least inviolate for seventeen centuries, has furnished us with means, which we should vainly seek in any other part of the world, of comparing modern forms of life with those of the mixed Græco-Romans of the empire.

Into these details this is not the place to enter; but the account we have received of the fatal eruption is valuable for the study of Roman character, as well as for its own intrinsic interest. The writer is the younger Pliny, the nephew of the great naturalist, who describes it in two well-known letters.¹ The elder Pliny, the friend and devoted servant of Vespasian and Titus, at this time commanded the imperial fleet at Misenum, and divided his time with marvellous assiduity between the discharge of official duties, and the accumulation of extraordinary stores of knowledge. Remarkable for his industry even among the industrious statesmen of his country, Pliny had served the commonwealth at home and abroad, in peace and war, in the highest posts, never intermitting throughout his career the habit of reading, noting, and composing, till, notwithstanding the multifarious business in which he had been immersed, his completed works and his collections for future arrangement had together reached an extent almost appalling to the imagination.² His compositions on contemporary history seem to have soon fallen into oblivion, and we possess no testimony to their merits; but the great work by which we know him became the recognised repertory of all the accepted facts of Nature, and its utility secured its preservation. His labour in col-

The great eruption of Vesuvius described by the younger Pliny.

hand, the Romans imposed on their Grecian subjects some of the worst of their own fashions. In the time of Nero, Pompeii was deprived of its public shows for ten years, as a punishment for an affray that had occurred there during a gladiatorial exhibition. Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 17.

¹ Plin. *Ep.* vi. 16, 20.

² Plin. *Ep.* iii. 5. The contemporary, or nearly contemporary, histories were: 1. A life of Pomponius Secundus; 2. A continuation of the history of Aufidius Bassus; 3. An account of the German wars.

lecting facts, and his assiduity, and to a great extent skill, in arranging them, deserve our highest admiration; he was not gifted, however, with much talent for observation, still less does he deserve from his powers of analysis or combination to be ranked with his master Aristotle. But the ardent thirst for knowledge, which impelled him to seek the scene of interest and danger, might have done honour to the wisest of philosophers, and the name of Pliny will ever be memorable as of an ancient martyr of science. Such was the irony of fate, that while the most illustrious explorer of nature, our own immortal Bacon, died from a vulgar cold caught in the ignoble experiment of stuffing a fowl with snow, his predecessor, far his inferior in genius and intelligence, perished gloriously in the examination of a grand volcanic phenomenon.

On the 24th of August in the year 79, Pliny was residing in his villa on the Misenian promontory, which lies about twenty miles in a direct line from the summit of Vesuvius, conspicuous across the gulf of Naples.

His attention was drawn from his books and writings to a cloud of unusual form and character, which hung over the mountain, and rose, as appeared on further examination, from it, spreading out from a slender and well-defined stem, like the figure of a pinetree.¹ Its colour changed rapidly from black to white, as the contents of the ejected mass of which it proved to be composed, were earth or ashes. The admiral ordered his Liburnian cutter to be manned, and casting aside his papers prepared to cross the water, and observe the phenomenon nearer. He asked his nephew to accompany him, but the younger student was

The elder
Pliny examines
the eruption,
and perishes in
it.

¹ Plin. *Ep.* vi. 16.: "cujus similitudinem et formam non alia magis arbor, quam pinus, expresserit. Nam longissimo velut trunco elata in altum, quibusdam ramis diffundebatur;" i. e. with a vertical stem and horizontal head; such as the phenomenon has often been described by subsequent observers. Seacchi, however, noted a different appearance in the eruption of 1850: the smoke was carried off in a long horizontal stream at a small elevation. Roth, *Vesuv.*, p. 248. (1857.)

too intent on the volumes before him to prosecute an inquiry into the operations of nature.¹ Meanwhile, intelligence arrived from the terrified residents at the foot of the mountain. They implored the powerful assistance of the commander of the fleet. Pliny directed his largest vessels to be got ready, and steered to the point nearest to the danger. As he approached the shore the ashes began to fall thick and hot upon his deck, with showers of glowing stones. A shoal formed suddenly beneath his keel, and impeded his progress. Turning a little to the right, he came to land at Stabiæ, at the dwelling of a friend. Here he restored confidence to the affrighted occupants by the calmness of his demeanor, while he insisted on taking the usual refreshment of the bath and supper, and conversed with easy hilarity. As the shades of evening gathered, the brightness of the flames became more striking; but to calm the panic of those around him, the philosopher assured them that they arose from cottages on the slope, which the alarmed rustics had abandoned to the descending flakes of fire. He then took his customary brief night's rest, sleeping composedly as usual; but his attendants were not so easily tranquillized, and as the night advanced, the continued fall of ashes within the courts of the mansion convinced them that delay would make escape impossible. They roused their master, together with the friend at whose house he was resting, and hastily debated how to proceed. By this time the soil around them was rocking with repeated shocks of earthquake, which recalled the horrors of the still recent catastrophe. The party quitted the treacherous shelter of the house-roof, and sought the coast in hopes of finding vessels to take them off. To protect themselves from the thickening cinders they tied cushions to their heads. The sky was darkened by the ceaseless shower, and they groped their way by torchlight, and by the intermitting flashes from the mountain.² The sea was agitated, and abandoned by

¹ Plin. l. c.: "respondi, studere me malle:—*et forte ipse, quod scriberem, dederat.*" The apologetical whisper in the last clause is exquisite.

² The ashes, as Dion had been informed, were wafted not only to Rome,

every bark. Pliny, wearied or perplexed, now stretched himself on a piece of sail-cloth, and refused to stir farther, while on the bursting forth of a fiercer blast accompanied with sulphureous gases, his companions, all but two body-slaves, fled in terror. Some who looked back in their flight affirmed that the old man rose once with the help of his attendants, but immediately fell again, overpowered, as it seemed, with the deadly vapours. When the storm abated and light at last returned, the body was found abandoned on the spot; neither the skin nor the clothes were injured, and the calm expression of the countenance betokened death by suffocation.

Such is the account the younger Pliny gives of his uncle's death from hearsay. In another letter he relates the circumstances which he himself witnessed from his safer post at Misenum, and as might be expected with more vividness and distinctness;¹ and allowance

Pompell and
Herculanum
abandoned and
almost forgot-
ten.

must be made for the vanity and frivolity of expression which disfigure, it must be confessed, the dreadful tale, from the youth of the narrator, who was but eighteen at the time. It may be observed that his remarks give no indication of the streams of mud or lava, which form generally the most destructive features of volcanic convulsions. The projected volume of solid matter, such as sand and ashes in a state of ignition, consumed, as we have seen, all the habitations of man on which it lighted, or if its heat was a little abated by distance, engulfed them under a ponderous mass of dust and cinders. The shower was wafted perhaps in where they were supposed to have caused the pestilence which ensued, but to Africa, Syria, and Egypt. Dion, lxi. 23. In later eruptions they have been carried to Africa, and even to Constantinople. Valerius Flaccus, a contemporary, seizes upon this incident for a novel simile, comparing it to the rapid flight of the Harpies (iv. 508.):

"Vix dum ignea montem

Torsit hyems, jamque Eoas cinis induit urbes."

¹ Plin. *Ep.* vi. 20. Both this and the other letter are addressed by the writer to his friend Tacitus, with a view to the account of his own times, which the great historian was then compiling: "quo verius tradere posteris possis."

various directions by the shifting breezes ; Herculaneum to the south-west, and Pompeii to the south-east of the mountain were completely overwhelmed by it, while other spots between them and around them escaped almost scatheless. The eruption seems to have been preceded by some premonitory shocks, and it is evident that these towns were in a great measure abandoned at the moment of the catastrophe ; the descent, indeed, of the falling masses was not too sudden and precipitate to allow the people to fly themselves, and remove at least a portion of their effects.¹ Some attempts seem also to have been early made to revisit the scene of desolation, and repair the damage inflicted ; but fresh heavings of the mountain, and repeated showers of ashes, continued to baffle the survivors. New homes were found ; the old treasures were abandoned when the spot where they lay could no longer be traced ; and in the lapse of two or three generations the careless loungers of the Campanian coast had forgotten even the site of the ruined cities beside them.²

¹ Dion says loosely and inaccurately, lxvi. 23. : τὸ τε Ἑρκουλάνεον καὶ Πομπηίους, ἐν θεάτρῳ τοῦ ὁμίλου αὐτῆς καθημένον, κατέχωσε. This should refer to Pompeii ; but the theatres excavated here and at Herculaneum present no remains of a buried population.

² Statius, as might be expected, speaks more feelingly of the calamity than any of the few other writers who allude to it ; but even he is ready, within ten or twelve years, to consign it to oblivion. *Comp. Sylv. iv. 4. 81 :*

“ Mira fides : credetne virūm ventura propago,
Cum segetes iterum, cum jam hæc deserta virebunt,
Infra urbes populosque premi, proavitaque toto
Rura abuisse mari ! Nec dum lethale minari
Cessat apex.”

The emperor Marcus Aurelius moralizes on the subject a century later : *Meditationes*, iv. 48.—Ἐννοεῖν συνεχῶς πόσοι μὲν ἰατροὶ ἀποτεθνήκασι . . . πόσοι δὲ φιλόσοφοι . . . πόσοι δὲ τύραννοι . . . πόσοι δὲ πῶλεις ὄλαι, ἢ οὕτως εἰπω, τεθνήκασι, Ἑλίκη καὶ Πομπηῖοι καὶ Ἡράκλειον καὶ ἄλλαι ἀναρίθμητοι.

CHAPTER LXI.

DOMITIAN EMPEROR.—HIS EDUCATION AND CHARACTER.—EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THIS REIGN.—CAMPAIGNS OF AGRICOLA IN BRITAIN, A. D. 78–84 : A. U. 831–837.—HE IS RECALLED FROM THE CONQUEST OF CALEDONIA.—DOMITIAN'S EXPEDITION AGAINST THE CHATTI, A. D. 84 : U. C. 837.—HE CLAIMS A VICTORY, AND ASSUMES THE TITLE OF GERMANICUS.—FISCAL NECESSITIES AND COMMENCEMENT OF CONFISCATIONS.—CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE DACIANS.—DEFEAT AND DEATH OF FUSCUS.—VICTORY OF JULIANUS.—PEACE WITH THE DACIANS, A. D. 90 : A. U. 843.—A PRETENDED NERO.—SUCCESSSES IN AFRICA.—REVOLT OF ANTONIUS, A. D. 93 : A. U. 846.—RENEWED CRUELITIES AND ALARMS OF DOMITIAN.

IT was reported that Domitian had intrigued against his father, and there was little question but that he had sought to supplant his brother. Rumour accused him further of having hastened the death of Titus, by causing him, in an access of his mortal fever, to be immersed in a bath of snow.¹ Contemporary history affirmed at least for certain that he quitted his brother's bedside, while life was yet in him, and hurried to Rome to seize the suffrage of the prætorians, and secure with their assistance the homage of the senate. Titus indeed had already declared that he regarded Domitian as the partner of his power, and had continued, even under the greatest provocation, to point to him as his legitimate successor. It was in vain, however, that the gentle emperor had sought the love and gratitude of his unworthy brother. Domitian scowled upon him with ill-disguised impatience for his decease, and when, at last, he obtained possession of the throne, declared with brutal exultation that he had himself bestowed it upon his father and

Domitian assumes the empire.

¹ I presume this was in fact the same vigorous cold water treatment which had saved Augustus and killed Marcellus.

brother, and now received back his own gift from them. He discharged the formal duty of pronouncing the funeral oration, and soliciting the consecration of Titus; but his praises were cold or insidious, and the people were little satisfied with the meed of honour assigned to their favourite.¹

Titus left, as we have seen, no male descendant, and the daughter of a Roman house could not take the inheritance of her father, which was in law the property of the family, and went along with the liability to maintain the family rights, and perform the proper functions of a citizen. To accept the office of princeps or imperator, of censor or pontiff, was not more impossible for Julia than to assume the chiefship of a patrician house. Domitian, the deceased's brother, was the apparent heir to the estate, and therewith presumptive heir, according to the notions of the time, to the political functions with which the deceased had been invested. It might require indeed a vote of the senate and a *lex curiata* to confer the empire formally upon him; but subject to this formality, his claim might be considered as sufficiently established. The natural feelings of paternity, however, were beginning to assert themselves against the long descended rules of law and primitive usages. Titus was anxious for his daughter's happiness and greatness. With his Asiatic training, he had discarded, no doubt, many of his ancestral prejudices, and the son of the plain Sabine burgher had felt no scruple in proposing to unite his daughter in marriage with his own brother. Such unions, as we have seen, had been legitimized by Claudius, but they had not been sanctioned by public opinion. By the genuine Roman they were still reputed foreign, oriental, abominable. Domitian rejected the proposal. True, he might feel that his claim was too strong to require any subsidiary support: true, he was enamoured of the wife of a senator whom he required to repudiate her hus-

His claims superior to those of the daughter of Titus, or of her husband.

¹ Comp. Suet. *Domit.* 2.: "defunctum nullo præterquam consecrationis honore dignatus, sæpe etiam carpsit obliquis orationibus et edictis." Dion, *lxvii.* 2.: πάντα τὰ ἐναντιώτατα ὧν ἐβούλετο σκαπτόμενος.

band in order to contract nuptials with himself.¹ Nevertheless, a purist as he was by early breeding, and a reformer as he afterwards proved himself, and uncontaminated by contact with the licentious East, Domitian shrank perhaps with genuine repugnance from the questionable arrangement proposed to him. Julia, thus repulsed, was united to her father's first cousin, Flavius Sabinus, and this man might feel perhaps aggrieved that the splendid inheritance of the Cæsars should pass out of the line of natural descent, or, that he should not be himself adopted by his father-in-law. Hence the jealousy with which, as we shall see, Domitian continued to regard him; and hence, perhaps, the intrigue which the emperor carried on, even before his accession, according at least to common rumour, with the niece whom he had refused in marriage, but whom he might craftily seek to attach to himself by the tie of an irregular connexion.²

The personal history of Domitian indeed has been made the sport of common fame, and we need hardly trouble ourselves to analyse it. The anecdotes of the historians are put together with little judgment or consistency. Suetonius, for instance, assures us explicitly that the advantages of his distinguished parentage, born, as he was, in the very year of his father's consulship, were wholly lost to him, and while Titus enjoyed a liberal education, Domitian was entirely neglected in consequence of the obscurity and indigence into which Vespasian subsequently fell.³

Unjust disparagement of Domitian's early education.

¹ This was Domitia, daughter of Corbulo, and wife of Ælius Lamia. Suet. *Domit.* 22. Dion, lxxvi. 3. Domitian had seduced her in the year of his administration with Mucianus, when he was himself but nineteen years of age, and had soon afterwards married her. In the year 826 (his second consulship, Suet. *Domit.* 3. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.*) she bore him a son who died in infancy. Domitian continued to live with her, with one interruption, until his death.

² This connexion began, apparently, as soon as Julia was betrothed, and before she was married to Sabinus. Suet. *Domit.* 22.: "fratris filiam adhuc virginem, oblatam in matrimonium sibi, quum devinctus Domitiæ nuptiis pertinacissime recusasset, non multo post alii collocatam, corruptit ultro, et quidem vivo adhuc Tito."

³ Suet. *Domit.* 1. Domitian was born in the year of his father's first

While Titus found honourable employment in the camp and rose to the highest commands, his brother, we are told, was suffered to grow up uncared for, in a mean corner of the city, and in such wretched poverty as to be driven to the vilest degradation for patronage or support. But even the same writer's casual remark, that the young man, when fleeing from the burning Capitol, took refuge in the house of a *fellow student*, shows that this account is not to be lightly credited. Nor is the reputation he subsequently attained for literary accomplishments, however much it may have been enhanced by interested flatterers, consistent with such abject beginnings. Even the patronage he pretended at least to extend to letters, of which more will be said hereafter, seems to evince an appreciation of literary adulation seldom found in the grossly rude and ignorant. His mother indeed died in his childhood, and his father may have been frequently absent or engaged; but it is not likely that the nephew of a personage so distinguished as Sabinus would be left in utter destitution. Domitian, we may presume, received and profited by the usual instruction in grammar, rhetoric and philosophy. Possibly he enjoyed, from the Sabine traditions of his house, a simpler and severer training than usually fell to the lot of children of his rank. When in later life he replaced the humble tenement in which he first saw the light, with a temple to the Flavian family, we may trace, perhaps, the act not to superstitious feelings only but to an antique sentiment of pious affection.¹

consulship, A. U. 804 (Oct. 24.), and was therefore ten years younger than Titus.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 1. Martial, ix. 21. :

“Hic steterat veneranda domus, quæ præstitit orbi
Quod Rhodus, astrifero quod pia Creta polo.”

The birth-place of Domitian, and consequently the site of the temple of the Flavian family, was at a place called the *Malum Punicum* in the Sixth Region, denominated *Alta Semita*, which included the Quirinal and some of the densest parts of the Servian city. This temple is not to be confounded with that of Vespasian in the Forum.

Our authorities delight in representing the younger son of Vespasian as a striking contrast to the elder, the darling of the Roman people. Yet there was at least a strong family resemblance between them. Both were constitutionally impulsive and irritable; both took with feminine facility the varnish of patrician refinement; both were naturally voluptuous and sensual, and surrendered themselves to the charms of Circe and the Sirens. Had Titus been left at Rome in his tender years, exposed to every temptation, and denied the conduct of affairs and the discipline of active life, these propensities would have attained the same ascendancy over him which appeared so fatally in Domitian. But whether from the misfortune of his breeding, or from his natural deficiencies, the character of the younger brother presents, on the whole, but a pale reflection of that of the elder. That which is generosity in the one becomes mere physical sensibility in the other. Titus pledged himself to shed no human blood during his principate; Domitian proposed to forbid the sacrifice of oxen.¹ The one could be cruel from policy or necessity, the other from mere puerile impatience. Titus wasted Judea with fire and sword; Domitian persecuted the flies, and made a solitude of his chamber.² The deportment of the elder brother was sociable and kindly, and if he enjoyed with too keen a zest the pleasures of his station, he at least shared them genially with his companions. Domitian is described as morose and solitary, even in his relaxations. He gave, indeed, the banquets prescribed by custom; but they were joyless and

Comparison
between Titus
and Domitian.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 9.: "inter initia usque adeo ab omni cæde abhorrui, ut absente adhuc patre, recordatus Virgilii versum, *Impia quam curis gens est epulata iuvenis*, edicere destinarit ne boves immolarentur."

² Suet. *Domit.* 3.: "nec quicquam amplius quam muscas captare, ac stylo præacuto configere." When it was asked, "Was any one with Domitian?" "Not even a fly," answered the witty Crispus ("Crispi jucunda senectus:" Juv. iv. 81.). Comp. Dion. lxvi. 9. Victor. *Epit.* 11.; *Cæs.* 11. Comp. Plin. *Paneg.* 48.: "non adire quisquam non alloqui audebat, tenebras semper secretumque captantem, nec unquam ex solitudine sua prodeuntem, nisi ut solitudinem faceret."

hurried, irksome both to the host and to his guests.¹ Titus, again, devoted himself nobly to sustain his father's interests, while he shared his fame; but Domitian, with equal ambition was meanly jealous of his brother's reputation, and anxious to snatch laurels in which his kinsmen should have no part. Frustrated in his endeavours to emulate their military glory, he might pretend to occupy himself in arts and letters; but neither the pleasure of study, nor the praise of flatterers, could really soothe his wounded vanity, and he intrigued against them living, and detracted from their merits when dead.

But the stately march of the Roman princes has too long occupied the stage and engrossed our whole attention. A new scene of war and military glory may here be interpolated in the imperial drama, and remind us of the aggressive attitude which in its vigorous old age the empire still retained in the face of opposing barbarism. The Britannic legions had been little moved by the passion of the civil wars. With Galba, at least, and with Otho, they had no personal connexion; they were too far removed from the centre of affairs to covet the spoils of Rome and Italy; and above all, their hands and minds were fully occupied with the toils and dangers immediately before them.² But the accession of a great military chief to power had roused the pride of the soldiers, and given a sudden impetus to the career of conquest. Vespasian might regard with personal interest the complete reduction of Britain where he had gained his own earliest distinctions. The Fourteenth legion, which had followed Vitellius to Bedriacum, had been sent

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 21.: "lavabat de die prandebatque ad satietatem," i. e., his solitary morning meal was ample; but, "convivabatur," he supped "frequenter et large, sed pæne raptim: certe non ultra solis occasum; nec postea comissabatur."

² Tac. *Hist.* i. 9.: "In Britannico exercitu nihil irarum. Non sane alio legiones, per omnes bellorum civilium motus, innocentius egerunt: seu, quia procul et Oceano divisæ; seu crebris expeditionibus doctæ hostem potius odisse."

back, flushed with victory and chafed with disappointment, to its quarters in the island, and its discontent could only be allayed by the excitement of active service. But since the removal of Suetonius Paulinus, the prefects of the British province had been directed to keep the sword, if possible, in the scabbard. Petronius Turpilianus had been satisfied with restoring the disturbed districts to submission. Trebellius Maximus had mitigated the severity of the proconsular government, but at the same time had relaxed the discipline of the legions. The soldiers pretended that he was immersed in the care of amassing a fortune, and the Twentieth legion, disdaining his control, had broken out in mutiny, at the instigation of its chief, and driven him out of the island.¹ Trebellius had repaired to Rome, where Vitellius was clutching at the purple; but the tottering emperor could give no support. The soldiers rallied together for their own security, and the peace of the province did not suffer by the paralysis of the capital. On the restoration of authority at Rome, Vettius Bolanus was sent to take the command, and their recent excesses seem to have been prudently overlooked. With equal prudence the mutinous legion had declared itself for Vespasian, and the Second, which he had himself formerly commanded, naturally sided with him.² Tacitus affirms that the new governor was indolent though not seditious; but the depression of one chief is an easy artifice for exalting his successor, and I am tempted in this instance to weigh the testimony of a poet against that of an historian.³ The praises of Statius, however overstrained, seem at least to indicate that Bolanus placed himself at the head of his movable columns, laid out his camps, erected his tribunals, fought bat-

Successive prefects: Petronius Turpilianus, A. D. 61. Trebellius Maximus, A. D. 65.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 39.; *Hist.* i. 60., ii. 65.; *Agric.* 16.

² Tac. *Agric.* 18.; *Hist.* i. 60.

³ Tac. *Agric.* 8.: præerat tunc Britanniae Vettius Bolanus, placidius quam feroci provincia dignum est. *Comp.* 16.

tles, gained victories, and dedicated to the Gods of Rome the spoils of vanquished enemies.¹

Tacitus might have remembered that it was impossible to undertake any extensive operations while the loyalty of the legions was yet unassured, and while, from the want of reinforcements and the cessation of the ordinary levies, their numbers were probably incomplete. C. Julius Agricola, a brave and able officer, but as yet unknown to fame, was placed at the head of the mutinous Twentieth, the head quarters of which were at Deva, whence it kept in check the Brigantes of Yorkshire on the one hand, and the Ordovices of North Wales on the other.² The recovery of this corps to the interests of Vespasian secured the position of the Romans in Britain. Peti-

Petilius Cerialis, A. D. 71.

Julius Frontinus, A. D. 75.

C. Julius Agricola, consul, A. D. 77; proconsul in Britain.

A. D. 78.
A. U. 831.

lius Cerialis, the next proconsul, was enabled to carry on offensive operations, and Julius Frontinus, who followed him, chastised and pacified the revolted Silures. The services of Agricola were rewarded by promotion to the government of Aquitania, from whence, in less than three years, he was summoned to Rome, and elevated to the consulship. Vespasian was anxious to maintain and possibly to extend his possessions in Britain, and he chose this distinguished chief as the best instrument for controlling the legions and pacifying the natives.³

In the palmy days of Rome the same man was both warrior and statesman: the consul led the Fathers in the senate

¹ Statius, *Sylv.* v. 2. 144. foll. :

“Hic suetus dare jura parens ; hoc cespite turmas
Affari : nitidas speculas castellaque longe
Aspicis ? ille dedit, cinxitque hæc mœnia fossa.”

² Agricola belonged to the colony of Forum Julii in the Narbonensis. He was doubly devoted to the defence of the new Flavian dynasty, his father having been sacrificed to the tyranny of Caius Cæsar, and his mother slain by marauders from the fleet of Otho. *Agric.* 4. 7.

³ Tac. *Agric.* 8. 9. During his consulship (A. U. 830), and with this greater preferment full in view, Agricola betrothed his daughter to Tacitus, who appreciated the value of a choice which seemed to open to him the highest honours.

house and their sons on the battle field ; but with the change of manners a new theory now prevailed, that the profession of arms unfits men for political affairs. *Many think, says Tacitus, that the military character lacks subtlety and tact.*

Agricola's conduct as governor, and first and second campaigns.
A. D. 78, 79.
A. U. 881, 882.

*Camps are governed by strong will and prompt action ; and give no play to the shrewdness which scays the forum.*¹ But Agricola, to follow the portraiture of his son-in-law, disproved this theory, or served to confirm it by one notable exception. His administration in peace was just and temperate, and showed that he could guide the men of the gown as well as he could command the men of the sword. His first care was to gain the confidence of the provincials and engage them to embrace the arts and manners of their conquerors. He proposed the dress and language of Rome for their adoption, and taught them, with more success than any of his predecessors, to admire and cultivate the luxuries of southern civilization. Meanwhile the flower of their youth was drafted off to recruit the forces of the empire in distant regions, and battalions from Gaul and Spain, from Thrace and Africa, brought over to furnish auxiliaries to the legions in Britain, and maintain by their side the quarrels of the empire. Even in his first summer, when he had been but a few months in the island, and when none even of his own officers expected active service, Agricola led his forces into the country of the Ordovices, in whose mountain passes the war of independence still lingered, drove the Britains across the Menai Straits, and pursued them into Anglesey, as Suetonius had done before him, by boldly crossing the boiling current in the face of the enemy. Another summer saw him advance northward into the territory of the Brigantes, and complete the organization of the district, lately reduced, between the Humber and Tyne. Struck perhaps with the natural defences of the line from the Tyne to the Solway, where the island seems to have been

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 9. : "credunt plerique militaribus ingeniis subtilitatem deesse ; quia castrensis jurisdictio secure et obtusior, ac plura manu agena, calliditatem fori non exerceat."

broken, as it were, in the middle and soldered unevenly together, he drew a chain of forts from sea to sea, to protect the reclaimed subjects of the Southern valleys from the untamed barbarians who roamed the Cheviots and the Pentlands.¹

To penetrate the stormy wilds of Caledonia, and track to their fastnesses the hordes of savages, the Ottadini, Horestii,

Agricola establishes himself on the line of the Tyne and Solway.

and Mæataë, who flitted among them, was an enterprise which promised no plunder and little glory. The legions of Rome, with their expensive equipments, could not hope even to support

themselves on the bleak mountain sides, unclaimed by men and abandoned by nature. His camps on the Tyne and Irthing were the magazines from which Agricola's supplies must wholly be drawn; the ordinary term of a provincial prefecture was inadequate to a long, a distant, and an aimless adventure. But Vespasian had yielded to the ardour of his favourite lieutenant; ample means were furnished, and ample time was allowed. In the third year of his command, Agricola pushed forward along the eastern coast, and making good with roads and fortresses every inch of his progress,

Reaches the isthmus between the Forth and Clyde.

reached, as I imagine, the Firth of Forth.² He had quitted the waist and had here reached the neck of Britain, the point where the two seas are divided by an isthmus less than forty miles in

breadth. Here he repeated the operations of the preceding winter, planting his camps and stations from hill to hill, and

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 18–20. The first and second campaigns of Agricola occupied the summer of 831, 832. The winters were employed—"saluberrimis consiliis"—in bending the minds of the Britons to the arts of peace.

² Tac. *Agric.* 22.: "tertius expeditionum annus (833) novas gentes aperuit, vastatis usque ad *Tanaum*, æstuario nomen est, nationibus." This is the true reading of the MSS. for which *Tam* (the Tay) was substituted by Puteolanus from a marginal gloss. I cannot suppose that Agricola crossed the Firth of Forth in this campaign. Wex, in his edition of the *Agricola*, suggests that *Tanaus* is the North Tyne, which falls into the Firth near Dunbar. Tan, as is well known, is a common Celtic appellative for running water, and may possibly be applied to the estuary itself, although Bodotria is the name specifically assigned to the river Forth, if not to the Firth called after it.

securing a new belt of territory, ninety miles across, for Roman occupation. The natives, scared at his presence and fleeing before him, were thus thrust, in the language of Tacitus, as it were into another island. For a moment the empire seemed to have found its northern limit. Agricola rested through the next summer, occupied in the organization of his conquests, and employed his fifth year also in strengthening his position between the two isthmuses, and reducing the furthest corners of the province, whence the existence of a new realm was betrayed to him. The grassy plains of teeming Hibernia offered a fairer prey than the gray mountains which frowned upon his fresh entrenchments, and all their wealth, he was assured, might be secured by the valour of a single legion. But other counsels prevailed; Agricola turned from the Mull of Galloway, and Ireland, so the fates ordained, was left to her fogs and feuds for eleven more centuries.¹

Comes in sight of Ireland from the Mull of Galloway.

The Caledonians had resumed their courage during the two years' inaction of the invading legions. In the year 836, the sixth of his protracted command, Agricola, understanding that they were collecting their forces to make a combined attack upon his lines, determined to surprise them by a rapid incursion into the regions beyond the Forth. The necessities of his own armament had required the attendance of a naval force, and when he advanced along the coasts of Fife, he drew his most certain supplies from the vessels which moved parallel to his flank. The rude natives might be amazed at the movements of these marine monsters; nevertheless, they were not dismayed, but thrusting themselves between his advancing columns and the fortifications in the rear, threatened, if they could not arrest his progress, at least to cut off his retreat. Agricola marshalled his forces in three brigades, to meet them at various points. The Ninth legion, the same which had been cut up by Boadicea, was assailed in its camp, and

Agricola penetrates beyond the Forth.

A. D. 83.
A. U. 836.

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 22-24., A. U. 834, 835.

only saved by the vigour of the division led by the general in person. The object of the campaign was gained perhaps by the discovery of a tract of fertile plains, stretching along the coast for many miles, and the invaders might return within their lines for the winter, with the expectation of fixing themselves firmly beyond them in the ensuing summer.¹

Roused to redoubled exertions by the assurance that the flying enemy had now but little room for retreat, surprised and encouraged by the attractive character of the lowlands, which continued still to border the eastern sea, the Romans pushed forward in a seventh campaign, and at last brought the Caledonians to bay on the battle field. The site of the famous struggle, which, described in the vigorous narrative of Tacitus, has invested with equal glory the names of both Agricola and Galgacus, has not been clearly determined. The opinion popularly received is unusually moderate. The imposing remains of Roman castrametation at Ardoch in Strathallan, have drawn the attention of the native antiquaries, who are generally content to suppose that the invaders did not actually penetrate more than ten miles beyond Stirling.² To me this spot seems to lie too far inland, if we may suppose at least that the legions depended on their fleet for almost all their supplies. I should presume also, that in this, their second campaign beyond the Forth, they pushed their successes considerably further north. The fields of Fife and Angus are seamed with numerous vestiges of Roman entrenchments; and though these may in fact be the work of a later generation of invaders, and though, as far as I can discover,

Site of the
great battle
with Galgacus.

A. D. 84.
A. U. 887.

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 25-27.

² The great camp at Ardoch would contain about 30,000 men, according to the Polybian arrangement; but if Agricola adopted the system which prevailed certainly under Trajan, and which was probably in use some generations earlier, this camp would accommodate fully 67,000, and this is a much larger number than his force can have reached. Hence it may be suspected that this camp belongs to the time of Severus, who is said to have penetrated into Caledonia with a much larger army. See Roy, *Military Antiq.* p. 190., who, however, supposes Agricola to use the Polybian castrametation.

there is nothing in the character of the entrenchments themselves to fix them to the first rather than to the second or third century, I am still inclined, on the whole, to place the scene in question in the neighbourhood of Forfar or Brechin.¹

The speeches put into the mouths of the rival chiefs are among the finest gems of Tacitean eloquence, and express the contrast, ever present to the philosophic historian's mind, between the civilized world and the barbarian, their respective hopes, fears, claims and destinies. Whether or not he had enjoyed, as some have supposed, an opportunity of studying this contrast on the spot, during an early residence on the Germanic frontier, his instinct seems, at least, to have discovered in it the germ of an impending revolution in the fortunes of his own countrymen.² Nor is the battle-piece which follows, and fitly crowns the narrative of his hero's military exploits, less celebrated for its vigour and vividness. To us it is chiefly interesting for the glimpse it reveals of Roman tactics at this period. Agricola had with him probably three Roman legions; but when menaced by the full force of the enemy, he prepares to meet the attack with his auxiliary cohorts of eight thousand men in the centre, and his auxiliary squadrons of cavalry, numbering three thousand, on the flanks. The legions, the flower of the whole army, are drawn up before the camp, far in the rear; nor, when pressed by his own officers to employ them in the field, will he consent to expose one man of this powerful reserve to the onset of the barbarians. All the loss and danger must fall upon the Batavians,

Battle of the
Grampians.

A. D. 84.
A. U. 837.

¹ Tacitus only says, "ad montem *Grampium* pervenit." Even the word *Grampius*, from which the modern geographical name for the frontier ridge of the eastern highlands has been adopted, seems to be an error. The best MSS. are said to give *Graupius*. Wex, on *Agric.* 29., and *Proleg.* p. 194.

² Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vii. 16, mentions a Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman knight, as procurator of Gallia Belgica, who has been vainly surmised to be the historian himself. This, however, is inconsistent with the dates. It is possible, however, that the procurator may have been the historian's father, and that our Tacitus may have resided as a child in the provinces.

the Usipians, the Gauls and Spaniards; but when the day is won by the blood of her subjects it is Rome that reaps the profit, and the legions of Rome that reap the glory, and acquire the titles of *Rapacious* and *Invincible*, *Apollinean* and *Minervian*.

This battle closed Agricola's seventh campaign.¹ The short summer was past, and no further progress could be made by land. But the complete reduction of Caledonia was still present to his view, and he meditated fresh plans of conquest from behind his entrenchments on the Forth and Clyde. Meanwhile, he directed the fleet which had attended him to advance northward along the coast from headland to headland, and carry the terror of the Roman name among the remotest tribes, while it procured him the information he required about the nature and resources of the country. The Roman mariners now for the first time entered the Pentland Firth, surveyed and counted the Orkney islands, and gained perhaps a glimpse of the Shetlands. They ascertained the point at which Britain terminates northward, and possibly noted the great deflection of the coast southward from Cape Wrath. Having effected the object of the expedition, they returned, as I cannot doubt, still creeping timidly, as was their wont, from headland to headland, and having hugged the eastern coast from Caithness to the Firth of Forth, were finally drawn up for the winter on the beach from which they had been launched at the commencement of the season.²

A. D. 84.

A. U. 887.

Pretended circumnavigation of Britain.

¹ The campaigns of Agricola extend from 78 (v. c. 831) to 84 (v. c. 837) inclusive. The battle with Galgacus was fought in the seventh year. But "*octavus annus est*," says Agricola in his speech. Some critics suspect an error of VIII. for VII. I hardly think Tacitus would have used so weak an exordium as "*Septimus annus est*." But though it was Agricola's seventh, it might be called the eighth campaign of his army; for in the year preceding his arrival, Julius Frontinus had led an expedition against the Silures. *Agric.* 17.

² The account I have ventured to give of this remarkable expedition requires some justification. Tacitus says (*Agric.* 38.), "*Præfecto classis circumvehi Britannium præcepit . . . et simul classis secunda tempestate ac fama Trutulensem portum tenuit, unde, proximo latere Britanniae lecto omni, redie-*

The best authorities, Cæsar and Diodorus, Pliny and Mela, had long before asserted the insular character of Britain; but the Romans, up to this time, had had a very imperfect conception of its size and figure, and when the legions, advancing northwards, season after season, saw the mountain crests of Caledonia still rising before them, and the expected limits of the island still constantly receding, they might feel some distrust of their geographical information, and require a more certain assurance of the fact known hitherto only by hearsay. The demonstration thus obtained was itself regarded as a triumphant achievement, and Agricola was celebrated by his countrymen as an explorer as well as a conqueror. But before the fleet had returned to its winter station, the decree had gone forth by which his career of conquest and dis-

Recall of Agricola.

A. D. 84.
A. U. 687.

rat." The last clause is crabbed and perhaps corrupt. Dion (lxi. 20.) supposes the fleet to have circumnavigated the whole island, and such has been the usual interpretation of modern critics, which they confirm by reference to *Agric.* 10. and 28. I am countenanced by Mannert in rejecting this interpretation. In c. 10., Tacitus, referring by anticipation to this voyage, says, speaking of the projecting part of Britain, which is called distinctively Caledonian: "hanc oram novissimi maris tunc primum Romana classis circumvecta insulam esse Britanniam affirmavit;" that is, confirmed the inference previously drawn from the character of the southern district. It is unnecessary, therefore, to suppose that the fleet completed the circumnavigation of the whole island on this occasion. Again, in c. 28., our author relates the incident of certain Usipians in the service of Agricola seizing on some ships by which, "circumvecti Britanniam," they were at last wafted to the coast of Friesland. Here the circumstances cannot reasonably admit of the common explanation. "Circumvehi," however, does not necessarily mean *to be carried round*; but may signify simply *to make a sweep*, or to be wafted *from point to point*. Thus, Virgil says: "circum pictis vehitur sua rura phaselis." See several other instances in Forcellini under "circumveho, circumvecto." The Usipians, as I understand it, ran down the east coast from the Forth, till they came opposite to Friesland. The "portus Trutulensis" is not mentioned elsewhere. The critics commonly suppose it to be a false reading for "Rutupensis." But the fleet which attended upon Agricola must have had its winter haven in the north, and nowhere so probably as in the Firth of Forth. The expedition, then, according to my view, sailed from the Forth to Cape Wrath, or thereabouts, and returned the same way that it went, having skirted *all the nearest*, i. e., the east coast of Caledonia.

covery was to be arrested, and the great proconsul was himself, in obedience to his letters of recall, far advanced on the road to Italy. Directed to transfer his authority to the successor assigned to him, he obeyed without hesitation, for Agricola knew how to obey as well as to command.¹ Domitian, indeed, according to a popular rumour, was apprehensive lest his victorious lieutenant, at the head of a province which respected, and an army which idolized him, should refuse to surrender his power, and challenge his imperator to a conflict. He sent a freedman to him, with the offer of the government of Syria; charging him at the same time not to deliver it if Agricola should have already relinquished his post unbribed. The envoy encountered the returning general in mid-channel, kept the letter under his skirt, and restored it unopened to his master.²

The bitter charges Tacitus makes against Domitian, the envy and dissimulation he imputes to him in the matter of Agricola's recall, are such as from the tyrant's known character we may readily believe. Yet, a better and abler man than the degenerate son of Vespasian, might now have hastened, not from jealousy, but with a wise discretion, to bring the British campaigns to a close. It was hardly consistent with prudent policy, nor would it have been permitted in the sounder ages of the Republic, any more than of the Empire, that the governor of a distant dependency should remain for many years in command of all its resources, with the entire disposal of its places and emoluments, with a great public faction growing around him, and threatening to force him into a hostile attitude. No proconsul since Cæsar had waged seven years of warfare in any province, and the memory of Cæsar's proconsulate was not reassuring either to the senate

Jealousy of
Agricola im-
puted to Do-
mitian.

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 8.: "virtute in obsequendo . . . extra invidiam, nec extra gloriam erat."

² Tac. *Agric.* 40.: "credidit plerique . . . sive verum istud, sive ex ingenio principis fictum ac compositum est."

or the emperor.¹ Germanicus had been recalled after three campaigns; the hand of Corbulo had been held from year to year suspended. Nor were the results, calmly considered, worth the hazard. The victories of Agricola were barren; his conquests were merely disappointments. Never before were such efforts made for so trifling an object. The reduction of the whole of Caledonia would hardly have brought one gold piece into the imperial treasury. But the expense was enormous. Britain must have been exhausted by the requisitions imposed upon her for the supply of men and munitions; her tribute must have run low; her commerce must have languished; the progress of Roman arts and manners must have been arrested within her borders. The long career which had been already vouchsafed to Agricola was owing, perhaps, to the premature death of his first patron, Vespasian, the easy indolence of Titus, and the timidity of Domitian on his first accession to a position which he had earned by no merits of his own. But in the third year of his reign, the emperor, as we shall see, had conducted a campaign in person, and Rome acquiesced in his claim to a victory. Tacitus affirms indeed that the consciousness of his own failure in arms made him the more jealous of a genuine hero.² To me

¹ Tiberius, indeed, could say, *Ann.* ii. 26.: "se novies a divo Augusto in Germaniam missum:" but these missions were not consecutive, and some of them had been bloodless: "plura consilio quam vi perfecisse." Forceful in the mouth of Tiberius, the arguments here advanced would be still more forcible in that of Domitian.

² Tac. *Agric.* 39.: "inerat conscientia derisui fuisse nuper falsum e Germania triumphum, emptis per commercia quorum habitus et crines in captivorum speciem formarentur." The reader will observe the repetition of previous insinuations against the genuineness of the spoils of Caligula. I am compelled to express some doubt of the statement that there was any such triumph at all at this time. Eusebius in his Chronicle records one occasion of triumph only under Domitian (ad ann. 91): "Domitianus de Dacis et Germanis triumphavit." Suetonius says (c. 6.): "de Chattis Dacisque duplicem triumphum egit;" still referring to a single occasion, though the double solemnity may have occupied two consecutive days. The Dacian triumph, which undoubtedly took place, as we shall see, A. D. 91, is alone referred to by Dion, and there is no trace of an earlier one in the poets Martial and Statius. Suetonius, however,

it seems more probable that the conviction of his own prowess first gave him courage to check the aspiring chief, whom he naturally apprehended as a rival. In this, however, Domitian was unjust to his lieutenant. Agricola yielded with dignified submission. He shrank from the applause which the people would have lavished upon him; he accepted, indeed, respectfully, the triumphal ornaments proffered by his master, but he declined all further advancement or employment, and baffled the malice of his enemies by the studied moderation of his life and language in the city.¹ For nine years he continued to enjoy this prudent retirement, blessed in the happiness of a daughter married to the high-minded Tacitus, whose ardent aspirations for an impracticable liberty he controlled by the wisdom of his counsels and the living force of his example.²

The mutual relations of the barbarian hordes beyond the Rhine and Danube, which began from the second century to disturb the pride, to shake the power, and at last to threaten the existence of the empire, hardly yet require the attention of the reader of

Attitude of the
German tribes
towards Rome.

Roman history. At present, while the great peril was concealed, and no anxiety awakened, we may look from the Roman point of view on the Germans and Dacians, whose hostility caused as yet only transient and occasional annoyance. Claudius indeed, on the recall of Corbulo, had drawn within the Rhine the outposts of the Germanian province. Conquest was forbidden, and the eyes of the Romans were

must be in error when he says (c. 18.): "post duos triumphos Germanici nomine assumpto;" for the title Germanicus appears on the coins of Domitian from the year 84 downwards. Eckhel, vi. 378. Tacitus seems to have been misled by the assumption of this title after the campaign of 84.

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 40.: "cultu modicus, sermone facilis, uno atque altero amicorum comitatus."

² Tac. *Agric.* 42.: "non contumacia, neque inani jactatione libertatis, famam satumque provocabat." Compare Corbulo (Dubois du Guehan *Tacite et son siècle*, ii. 387.). The merit of Agricola appears very strongly on comparing him with Corbulo, who could not keep within the limits prescribed to the subject either of a monarchy or of a republic. Corbulo might have become another Sulla or Marius.

averted from the prospect of future aggrandisement in that quarter. If the internal dissensions of the natives still operated for the advancement of Roman interests among them, the government assiduously disclaimed all intention of profiting thereby. It received petitions, heard complaints, recommended the redress of wrongs and grievances, and even arbitrated between rival aspirants to power in their respective communities, but it effectually checked the warlike ardour of its lieutenants, the most restless and dangerous class of its subjects, by lavishing the triumphal ornaments, the last object of military ambition, on the chiefs who refrained from war, and directed their energies to works of peace and measures of public security. To build a road or dig a canal might entitle the Germanian prefect to the favour and honours formerly reserved for a brilliant foray or a gallant victory.¹ It is true that the inactivity thus impressed on the command of the frontier armies encouraged the barbarians to insults and even outrages; but their hasty and inconsiderate attacks were easily baffled; their delinquent chiefs, instead of being punished by arms, were invited to carry their complaints to Rome, and there, surrounded by all the glories of imperial splendour, learnt to estimate the power of the conquering race, and to sigh for its luxuries. When the Frisian envoys beheld in the theatre the *Allies of the Roman people* seated next to the Consuls and Senators, they turned away from the games and shows in which they took little interest, but exclaimed that among the spectators of the games there were no friends more devoted to Rome than the Germans, and insisted on receiving a place among the most favoured nations.²

The northern frontier of the empire was skirted by three groups of barbarians: on the Rhine by the tribes of lower Germany, from the Frisii, on the coast, to the Chatti, in Nassau and Baden, some of which, such as the Cherusci and others, were well disposed to Rome, while the Chatti made themselves obnoxious by the eagerness with which

Three groups of barbarians on the northern frontier, on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Ister.

A. D. 84.
A. U. 837.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* xi. 18-20.

² Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 14.

they seized every safe opportunity of aggression. On the Danubius, or Upper Danube, the Marcomanni, formerly the subjects of Maroboduus, still retained a strong and settled polity, and were controlled by a chief named Vannius, who was able to maintain a durable peace with Rome. On the Ister, or Lower Danube, we hear of the restless hostility of the Mœsians, a name which will soon give way to that of the more famous and more formidable Dacians. During the insurrection of Civilis, the Chatti had made an inroad into the Roman province, and attempted to seize Moguntiacum. At the same period Mucianus, while advancing towards Italy, had been compelled to detach a force to repel an incursion of the Mœsians into Thrace. Domitian had flown to defend the Rhine, but the foe had already retreated, and it was not thought necessary to pursue them. Eager to distinguish himself as a warrior, he had besought his father to intrust him with another command on the frontiers; but the prudent Vespasian had maintained the tranquil policy of Claudius, and the young prince was doomed to remain still unlaurelled. Upon his accession to power his

Domitian leads
an expedition
against the
Chatti.

A. D. 84.
A. U. 837.

vanity was free to indulge itself. In the year 84 he placed himself at the head of the forces on the Rhine, and conducted an expedition against the Chatti. It was a mere summer promenade, in which the enemy resorted to their old tactics of retreat, and it is probable that no great engagement took place. Yet, the contempt with which the campaign is treated by some of our authorities seems hardly justified. One military writer, attached perhaps to the emperor's suite, and though a courtier by position, a man who at least had good means of knowing the circumstances, speaks of it with warm but not overweening applause. The Germans were indeed always ready to accede to moderate demands of slaves or tribute exacted from them as the price of withdrawal, and the treaty concluded with the Chatti by Domitian is no proof of a brilliant success. But the weight of the emperor's sword is rather to be traced in the tranquillity which con-

tinued to reign in this quarter, and in the Romanized population spread throughout the contiguous districts, which enabled Trajan, a few years later, to annex them permanently to the empire.¹

Domitian hastened back to Rome, and no doubt vaunted his prowess to the utmost. The people applauded; the soldiers, gratified with an addition to their pay, shouted behind him as he entered the city, and shook their formidable weapons; the poets chanted their elaborate compliments; here and there only a whisper or a placard hinted that the victory was a lie, the show an imposture, the captives bought or borrowed for the occasion.² Domitian wanted magnanimity to despise these cavils, even if he knew them to be undeserved. But he now felt himself strong in the favour of the army, which he had led to the Capitol, and he could venture to recall the brave lieutenant whose exploits transcended his own. He had gained a victory over Agricola and his other captains, worth many victories over the enemies of Rome. He assumed himself the surname of Germanicus; he imposed this designation upon the month of September; but these empty titles added little to the complacency with which he felt that he was now the Chief of his own armies, now an Emperor indeed.³

Domitian claims a victory, and assumes the name of Germanicus.

¹ For the expedition against the Chatti, see Suet. *Domit.* 6.; Dion, lxxvii. 4. These writers treat it with the utmost contempt. On the other hand comp. Frontinus, *Stratagem.* i. 1. 8., ii. 11. 7.; Stat. *Sylv.* i. 4. 89., iii. 3. 168.: "victis parcentia foedera Chattis."

² See a preceding note on the triumph erroneously, as it would seem, ascribed to Domitian by Tacitus. The solemn entry of the emperor into Rome, after a victorious expedition, might bear the appearance, and perhaps attain, in loose language, the name of a triumph, without having any legitimate claim to it. Pliny refers to a later triumph over the Dacians (see below) when he contrasts with it the genuine honours of Trajan: "accipiet aliquando Capitolium non mimicos currus, nec falsa simulacra victoriæ;" see *Panegy.* 16. 17. The imputation of fictitious trophies seems to have been as common as it was easy.

³ Martial, ix. 2.: "Dum Janus hiemes, Domitianus auctumaos.

Augustus annis commodabit ætates:

The senate next decreed that Domitian should be perpetual censor, and encouraged him to assume the consulship year after year successively. He had now repaired the damage inflicted on the Capitol by the recent fire, and completed the restoration of the most august of the Roman temples. But the treasures of Vespasian had already melted away in the hands of the liberal Titus; costly wars and barren triumphs had drained perhaps to the last sesterce the coffers of the empire; the day, fatal to despots, had arrived, when the revenues of the state could no longer meet its expenditure. The peace which Domitian had patched up in Germany, and imposed upon his lieutenants in Britain, might relieve the military chest in those quarters, but the increase of pay which the soldiers had extorted must at least have balanced this reduction. His attempt to reduce the numbers of the soldiery produced both alarm and peril, and seems to have been abandoned as impolitic or impracticable.¹ The means of raising fresh supplies for his personal extravagance, or for the shows and largesses which the people unceasingly demanded, were unfortunately too obvious. The emperor readily listened to the insinuations of his freedmen and flatterers. The noblest and wealthiest of his subjects were denounced as disaffected and dangerous. Already, in his third year of power, Domitian allowed himself to be seduced into the path of proscriptions and confiscations, and the senate shuddered at the apparition of a new Nero or Caligula.²

Domitian is pressed for money, and commences a series of confiscations.

Dum grande famuli nomen asseret Rheni,
Germanicarum magna lux Calendarum."

The assumption of this title was already known on the Nile in December, as appears from an inscription scratched on the statue of Memnon: "Sextus Licinius Pudens legionis xxii. xi. kal. Januarias anno IIII. D(omini) N(ostri) Domitiani Cæsaris Aug. Germanici audi Memnonem;" Orelli, *Inscript.* i. 521. The fourth year of Domitian commenced in Sept. 84.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 12.

² Euseb. *Chron.* ann. 2099, Domitiani 3. (from Oct. 83): "Domitianus nobiles multos relegavit et occidit." Clinton, *F. R.*, sub ann. 84. Comp.

The people witnessed with indifference the terror of the great, while they applauded the establishment of the Capitoline games, which were founded, in fact, on the ruins of the most illustrious Roman houses.¹

The prostration of the imperial finances was soon apparent in the inability of the government to interfere for the protection of its clients and suppliants in Germany. Rome had recently given a prince to the Cherusci; but the nation had risen against a nominee bred in a foreign city, the son of a chief

Domitian refrains from further interference in Germany.

who had demeaned himself by taking the name of Italicus, and they had thrown themselves upon the protection of the Chatti. In another quarter the Quadi and Marcomanni, who had also allowed Rome to nominate their ruler, found themselves attacked by the Lygii and Hermunduri, tribes of the interior. They appealed to the emperor for support; but, instead of armed legions, he sent them a deputation of a hundred knights with presents and promises.² Domitian well understood the true interest of his government, and he was disposed to look calmly on while the Germans fought out among themselves their private quarrels. Rome had surrounded the borders of her empire with a zone of half-reclaimed barbarians, but the cries of these dependents for assistance revealed the existence beyond them of another zone, far broader, of wholly unbroken communities whose names had not yet been bruited in Italy. The Hermunduri contended with the Chatti for the salt mines on the river Saale, in the very heart of Germany: the Chamavi and Angrivarii, which last may be placed in the district of Osnaburg, attacked the Bructeri on the Lippe. Sixty thousand of this

Oros. vii. 10.: "nobilissimos e Senatu invidiæ simul et prædæ causa Interfecit," &c.

¹ Juvenal, iv. in fin.: "Lamiarum cæde madenti." The head of this wealthy house, the former husband of Domitia, was sacrificed about this period to the cupidity rather than to the jealousy of Domitian.

² Dion, lxxvii. 5.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* iv. 25.: "regnum Vannianum;" from Vannius, king of the Quadi and Marcomanni, who succeeded through Roman influence to Maroboduus and Catualda.

nation, says Tacitus exultingly, were slain, by the hands, not of Romans, but of their own countrymen, for the benefit of the Romans, *which is still more gratifying*; and the tribe, he adds, was utterly annihilated. The philosophic historian was sanguine in his patriotism. The name of the Bructeri reappears at intervals in the annals of border warfare, and even in the fifth century retains a place among the German tribes enumerated by Claudian, all of whom, no doubt, clutched their share of the spoils of the falling empire.¹

In one quarter of the Northern world, however, it was impossible to retain this indifferent attitude. Twice already have the Dacians come before us as a restless people, who troubled the Roman provinces on the lower Danube. In the latter years of Tiberius they had burst into Pannonia, and the weary or Timid emperor had made no vigorous effort to restrain them.² Again, in the heat of the late civil wars, they had watched the moment when the strength of the legions had been withdrawn from Mœsia, and crossing the frontier stream, had swept away the slender outposts of the empire, and threatened to storm the head quarters of the provincial government. The fortunate turn of Vespasian's affairs in Italy allowed Mucianus to detach one legion, the Sixth, from the forces he was himself bringing up from the East; and with this brigade, reinforced shortly afterwards by some battalions from the army of Vitellius, Fonteius Agrippa covered the province, and drove the barbarians beyond the Ister.³ Dion considers, probably

Hostile attitude of the Dacians.

¹ "Pulsis Bructeris et penitus excisis vicinarum consensu nationum." Tac. *Germ.* 33. The date of the event referred to is not given. The book *De Moribus Germ.* is supposed to have been written A. D. 99, the third year of Trajan. In the early part of this reign Spurius is said to have gained a victory over the Bructeri. Plin. *Ep.* ii. 6. This nation finds a place too in the Peutinger Table of the third century. Comp. also Claudian, viii. 451.: "accola sylvæ Bructerus Hercyniæ." Greenwood, *Hist. of the Germans*, i. 173. note. See also Bede, *Hist. Eccles.* v. 10.: "Antiqui Saxones Boructuarii . . . paganis adhuc ritibus servientes."

² Suet. *Oct.* 21.; *Tib.* 41.

³ Tac. *Hist.* iii. 46.

with justice, that the inhabitants of both banks of the Ister were homogeneous, and that the people whom the Romans designated as Dacians were known to the Greeks by the appellation of Getæ. Popularly, however, the former name is given to the tribes beyond the river, the latter to those within it; the one were the enemies and invaders, the others the subjects and provincials of the empire. Stretching from the Theiss to the Euxine, these tribes, though known by one generic name, formed a confederation of various communities. They had apparently a common capital, or temple, or place of assembly in the mountain fastnesses of Transylvania, from whence their broad territories gently sloped in every direction;¹ and the chief to whom they gave the command of their warlike expeditions was distinguished by the title, rather than the personal appellation, of Decebalus, or the *Strength of the Dacians*.²

The appellations, indeed, of the barbarian chiefs who flit from time to time across the stage in contest with the Romans have but little interest for us; for we can assign neither distinctive meaning to the names, nor character to the men who bore them. It would seem that the headship of the Dacian tribes was relinquished at this time by a king called Duras to another known to us by the name of Diarpaneus, and it is possible that this last was the same whom we shall meet with again under the title of Decebalus, in long sustained conflict with a later emperor. In the first year of Domitian, this war-

Domitian's
campaigns
against the
Dacians.
A. D. 86-90.
A. U. 839-843.

¹ Of the locality more will be said hereafter; but the allusions in Statius refer to the custom of the Dacians as known in Domitian's time. *Theb.* i. 20.: "Et conjurato dejectos vertice Dacos;" *Sylv.* i. 1. 7.: "attoniti vidit domus ardua Daci;" *ib.* 80.: "tu tardum in fœdera montem Longa pace domas;" *iii.* 3. 169.: "Quæque suum Dacis donat clementia montem."

² Leo, the great Sanscrit scholar, explains Decebalus by the Sanscrit Dhāvaka-bala, *Dacorum robur*, and Diurpaneus by Durpāna, *validam manum habens*. See Imhof, *Domitianus*, p. 55. Dr. Latham derives the Dacians from the Scythians, and discovers the name of Decebalus in Dizabulus, the first recorded king of the Turks. Bergmann (*Les Gîtes*, p. 40.) refers it to Dakhi-valhus, Scythian words, which he interprets *Faucon diurne*.

rior had ventured to cross the Danube and invade the Mœsian province; he routed a legion with the loss of its eagle, slew the prætor Oppius Sabinus, stormed and sacked many towns, and ravaged the Roman territory to the foot of the Hæmus. Strong measures were required to recover and secure the province. Numerous levies were to be raised, abundant supplies were to be collected. War against the savage races of the Danube could not be made self-supporting. While Domitian, just returned from his dubious successes on the Rhine, was courting the applause of the citizens and bribing the soldiers to fidelity, his preparations for a second expedition, more important and more dangerous than the first, were being urged forward in Italy, Illyricum, and Macedonia. In the spring of 86 all was ready for the emperor's descent upon the scene of action in person. He dared not intrust the command of his forces to the brave captain he had lately humiliated; but in Cornelius Fuscus, prefect of the prætorians, he possessed at least a faithful adherent of moderate ability, whom he could place at the head of his armies while he loitered himself in indolence at a frontier station. The Dacian chief had trained his followers in the Roman tactics, and utterly despised the adversary who now marched against him. He is said to have tauntingly required, as the price of peace, a poll-tax on the head of every Roman citizen. Nor were these arrogant pretensions unsupported by valour and conduct in the field. Withdrawing from the plains of Mœsia he enticed Fuscus to cross the Danube and follow his retreating forces, till he could close on him with advantage. The operations of the retreat and pursuit may have occupied some time, and we have no acquaintance with the particulars; but they ended in the complete defeat and rout of the Romans, with the loss of at least one legion and eagle, and the death of their commander.¹

Defeat and
death of Cor-
nellius Fuscus,
A. D. 87.
A. U. 840.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 6.; Juvenal, *iv.* 112.; Martial, *vi.* 76. The death of Fuscus may be placed in the year 87 (840). The loss of the Romans was supposed to have been very great, but Tacitus, in relating these events, declared that it was

The luxury and frivolity in which Domitian indulged in the conduct of this campaign are noted by the unfriendly hand of the younger Pliny. It was particularly asserted that he caused himself to be towed on his progress up or down the great rivers of Pannonia, to avoid the dissonant noise of oars.¹ However this may be, he seems to have taken no active part in the perils of the expedition, and soon quitted it for Rome, where he was persecuting the senate and the people, while his lieutenant was penetrating into the Dacian fastnesses and perishing sword in hand.² The disgrace of this defeat was, however, retrieved by a considerable victory gained in a subsequent campaign by Julianus, who encountered the enemy also on his own soil at a place named Tapæ, the site of which is not ascertained.³ Decebalus, it is said, saved himself from destruction by the stratagem of cutting down a forest to the height of the human figure, and clothing the stumps of the trees in armour, which deterred the Romans from advancing to complete their victory. Domitian was encouraged perhaps by this turn of fortune to leave Rome again for the frontiers, and even to advance in person against the Marcomanni, the Quadi, and the Sarmatians.⁴ These tribes, it seems, had failed to furnish Rome with the supplies she had demanded of them. They were now chastised for their neglect. Domitian satisfied himself that he had made the necessary impres-

Retrieved by a
subsequent
success.

the duty of a good citizen to conceal the numbers of the slain. The lost books of the *Histories* were known to Orosius, who has preserved this incident (vii. 10.): "Corn. Tacitus, qui hanc historiam diligentissime contexuit, de reticendo interfectorum numero, et Sallustium Crispum, et alios auctores quam plurimos sanxisse, et seipsum potissimum elegisse dicit."

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 82.; Dion, lxxvii. 6.

² Oros. vii. 10.: "cum et in urbe senatum populumque laniaret, et foris male circumactum exercitum assidua hostes clade conficerent." The secular games followed in 88, and this was perhaps the year of the victory of Julianus.

³ Julianus (Titius, Tertius or Tettius?) had been mentioned before by Tacitus as an able commander in Mœsia. *Hist.* i. 79.; ii. 85.; iv. 39, 40.

⁴ These names indicate, respectively, the tribes of the modern Bohemia, Moravia, and North-Western Hungary.

sion; though Tacitus would lead us to believe that here too the Roman arms met with some bloody reverses.¹

Meanwhile Julianus continued to press on the discomfited enemy, and Decebalus, we are assured, made many applications for peace before the emperor thought fit to declare the terms on which he would be content to grant it. Such perhaps were the fictions with which Roman vanity glossed over the disgrace of consenting, while the frontier of the empire received no extension, to make presents, or more truly, to pay tribute to a worsted enemy.² Still deeper was the disgrace, though little felt perhaps at the time, that Decebalus should not venture to put himself in the hands of the Roman emperor, but should send a vassal to conduct the treaty for him. Domitian flattered the pride of the soldiers by pretending to place a crown on the head of this envoy.³ He then sheathed his sword, and returned as a victor to his capital, where the people were prepared, as before, to receive him with acclamations, the poets to chant his glories, the senate to prostrate itself in servile assentation.⁴ He claimed a triumph for his lieutenant's victories over the Dacians, and celebrated conjointly with them his own successes in Germany; but for the more doubtful laurels he had gained in Sarmatia, he was content to demand the inferior honour of an ovation.⁵ He decreed that October, the month of his own birth, should henceforth be styled Domiti-

¹ Tac. *Agrie*. 41., summing up the disasters of Domitian's reign: "tot exercitus in Mœsia Daciaque et Germania Pannoniaque . . . amissi." So Eutrop. vii. 23.: "in Sarmatia legio ejus cum duce interfecta." Martial combines the Sarmatian with the Dacian campaigns, ix. 102:

"Cornua Sarmatici ter perfida contudit Istri,
Sudantem Geticâ ter nive lavit equum."

² Plin. *Panegy.* 11, 12.; Dion, lxxviii. 6. 9.

³ Dion, lxxvii. 7.; Martial, v. 3.

⁴ The peace with the Dacians was concluded in December 90, about the time of the Saturnalia: Comp. Martial, vii. 80, 91, 95. (Imhof, p. 65.), and Domitian returned to Rome in Jan. 91. Martial, viii. 8. The triumph may be placed in this year, in the consulship of Ulpian Trajanus and Aelius Glabrio.

⁵ Euseb. ad ann. 91: "Domitianus de Dacis et Germanis triumphavit."

anus.¹ He erected an arch, long since overthrown, but which rivalled in its day the Flavian arch on the Velia, near the gate of Triumph and the temple of Returning Fortune.² The city,—all the world, says Dion,—was filled with statues of the glorious emperor, and the Capitol was adorned with many such images in gilt bronze. The citizens, anxious to possess themselves of such brilliant portraits of their favourite hero, were forbidden to make their golden statues of less than a certain specified weight. But of all these effigies the most magnificent was the equestrian colossus in gilt bronze, erected in the centre of the forum, before the shrine of the Flavian family. Planted on a lofty pedestal, from which his head might be said, in poetic language, to pierce the sky, and shining down upon the glowing roofs of halls and temples, Domitian sate with his right hand advanced in the attitude of command, and bearing in his left a figure of Minerva, his sword reposing peacefully in its scabbard, while

Triumphal
arch, and other
monuments of
Domitian's
successes.

Equestrian
colossus.

Suet. *Domit.* 6.: “de Sarmatis lauream modo Capitolino Jovi intulit.” Cf. Eutrop. vii. 23.; Martial, viii. 15.; Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 3. 168.

“Hæc est quæ victis parcentia fœdera Chattis,
Quæque suum Dacis donat clementia montem:
Quæ modo Marcomanos post horrida bella vagosque
Sauromatas Latio non est dignata triumpho.”

It is commonly said that Domitian assumed the title of Dacicus in addition to that of Germanicus. The former title, however, does not appear on his coins, as is the case with the latter repeatedly, from 84 downwards. The line of Juvenal, vi. 205.: “Dacicus et scripto radiat Germanicus auro,” refers more probably to Trajan. On the other hand, Martial’s eighth book is dedicated Imp. Domitiano Cæs. Aug. Germ. Dacico.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 13. September 13 was the date of his accession, October 24 of his birth. Comp. Macrob. *Saturn.* i. 12.; Stat. *Sylv.* iv. 1. 42.

“Nondum omnis honorem

Annus habet, cupiuntque decem tua nomina menses.”

² According to Suetonius, Domitian erected so many Jani (small double arches) and other arches to his own honour, that some one at last scratched upon them the word ἀρκεῖ, Enough! For the triumphal arch and the adjacent temple see a spirited epigram of Martial, viii. 65.

his prancing war-horse trampled on the forehead of the captive Rhine.¹ We could have wished that the gorgeous verses of Statius had been addressed to a worthier object, and one which might have deserved a longer term of existence. But horse and rider were soon rolled in the dust, and our notion of one of the proudest works of art at Rome must be gathered by a comparison of the poet's laboured description with the existing statue of Aurelius, to which it seems to have borne a remarkable resemblance.²

Our historians insinuate that the glories of Domitian's triumph were, after all, but borrowed plumes; that, in default of the glittering spoils which had been so often borne to the Capitol, he had caused the furniture of his own palaces to be paraded before him; and the same tradition seems to be preserved in the sneer of Tacitus at the pretended captives from the Rhine. This is a mere repetition of the stories afloat on the occasion of Caligula's mock triumph, and history which repeats itself is justly suspected. But, however scanty were the trophies of the Germanic and Dacic wars, the people demanded shows

Triumph and
shows of Do-
mitian.

¹ Statius, *Sylv.* i. 1.

“Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso
Stat Latium complexa forum?
Ipse autem puro celsum caput æere septus
Templa superfulges?
Dextra vetat pugnas; lævam Tritonia virgo
Nan gravat, et sectæ præterdit colla Medusæ . . .
It tergo demissa chlamys: latus ense quieto
Securum . . . vacuæ pro cespite terræ
Ærea captivi crinem terit ungula Rheni.”

The statue seems to have been raised on a lofty pedestal, and it was placed on the site of the Curtian pool of the early forum, possibly on the exact spot where the column of Phocas, erected five centuries later, still stands.

² The lines above selected from the description of Statius may show the points of resemblance and difference. The attitude of the two riders is the same; in both the right hand is advanced unarmed. From the position of the left hand of Aurelius, there can be no doubt that it held the Palladium. But Aurelius has no sword by his side, and his steed does not appear to have trodden on a captive enemy.

and games in increasing profusion, and the emperor was compelled to plunder his own subjects to satisfy their rapacity. Large gifts, under the name of coronary gold, were required from every province and city, to bribe the soldiers and gorge the citizens.¹ All the nobility of Rome feasted with their ruler at an enormous banquet. The victor in a sterile campaign against the public enemy levied his exactions on nobles and provincials, and amidst all the exultations of his flatterers indications are not wanting, that the despot had now plunged with little restraint into a systematic career of violence and bloodshed.²

During the progress of these distant wars Domitian had been disturbed, though only for a moment, by the appearance of a pretended Nero, who threw himself on the support of the king of Parthia, if he was not in fact set up by the Parthians to annoy the chief of the rival empire. This event occurred per-

Appearance of
a pretended
Nero,
A. D. 89.
A. U. 842.

haps in 89, when the forces of the Roman government were fully occupied with their operations against the Dacians; nevertheless Domitian assumed a high tone, and demanded the surrender of the adventurer. War was threatened, and the note of preparation already sounded. When Tiridates promptly obeyed the summons, the court poets declared that their master had conquered the Parthians, and chanted their pæan over the baffled nations of the East. The Romans were at last disabused of the imposture regarding their late

¹ The triumph was an opportunity for demanding large sums from the provinces under the name of "aurum coronarium." Compare, for the extortion of Domitian, Plin. *Paneg.* 17. 41. The great banquet is celebrated by Martial, viii. 50.: "Vescitur omnis eques tecum, populusque, patresque, Et capit ambrosias cum duce Roma dapes;" and by Statius, *Syle.* iv. 2., who speaks of himself as a guest, and assures us that this immense concourse of citizens,—*"Romuleos proceres trabeataque Caesar Agmina mille simul jussit discumbere mensis,"*—was entertained under the roof of the vast imperial palace; *"tantum domino minor."*

² Orosius, l. c. Domitian seems to have laid his hands on the funds of public institutions. Frontinus, *de Aquæduct.* 118. See Marquardt, (Becker's) *Alterthüm.* iii. 3. p. 86. note.

tyrant, which had so long floated before their eyes; but the fable survived, as has been already mentioned, among the Jews and Christians, for many generations after the fall of the Flavian dynasty.¹ A revolt among the Nasamones in Numidia, caused by some fiscal oppression, demanded that the sword of Domitian should be drawn once more in the third quarter of the globe. The insurgents stormed a Roman camp, made themselves drunk, and were cut in pieces by the prætor Flaccus. The emperor wrote boastfully to the senate announcing, in the haughty language of divinity, that he had *forbidden the Nasamones to exist*.² Once more the poets profited by the occasion: once more Silius emulated the lofty flights of Virgil, and declared that to his patron, as to Augustus, the tribes of Ganges tendered their slackened bows, the Bactrians offered their emptied quivers. Again the exploits of a Roman emperor were likened to the triumphant progress of Hercules and Bacchus. The sources of the Nile, the summits of Atlas, were at last surmounted; the sun and stars were left behind in the panting race.³

The Dacian triumph, and the acts of tyranny which accompanied it, seem to have been quickly followed by a military

¹ Reimar, on Dion, lxiv. 9., enumerates the false Neros—1. A slave who raised a sedition in Pontus, and was slain by Asprenas during the reign of Otho; Tac. *Hist.* ii. 8.; Dion, l. c. 2. A man whose real name was Terentius Maximus, who appeared also in Asia; Zonar. xi. 18. 3. The pretender of whom we are now speaking, mentioned by Suetonius, *Ner.* 57., as appearing twenty years after Nero's death, i. e. in 89.

² Zonar. *Annal.* xi. 19. *Νασαμῶνας ἐκώλυσα εἶναι.*

³ Sil. Ital. iii. 612.:

“Huic laxos arcus olim Gangetica pubes
Submittet, vacuasque ostendent Bactra pharetras;
Hic et ab Areto currusaget axe per urbem,
Ducet et Eoos, Baccho cedente, triumphos.”

Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 154.:

“Nunc magnos Oriens dabit triumphos.
Ibis quo vagus Hercules et Evan
Ultra sidera, flammeumque solem,
Et Nili caput et nives Atlantis.”

insurrection, to which indeed they may have mainly conducted. When an obscure soldier, such as Vitellius or Vespasian, revolted against the reigning emperor, we may conclude him to have been the instrument of the legions or their officers in the provinces in which the revolt arose; but when, as in some less conspicuous instances, a man of high family and great connexions raised the standard of insurrection, it is fair to infer that he was instigated by sympathy with the oppressed class to which he personally belonged, and rather led the legions than was impelled by them. L. Antonius Saturninus commanded the Roman forces in the Upper Germany.¹ He was proud of his descent, in which he united two of the great houses of the republic, and of a name which might revive recollections both of a powerful triumvir and of a popular tribune.² He might claim respect from the nobles as well as favour from the people; and when the cry of the persecuted senators reached him on his prætorial tribunal, he might deem the moment propitious for opening to his soldiers the way to Rome, and invoking, at the same time, the hallowed associations of republican freedom. He intrigued with the

Revolt of Antonius Saturninus,
A. D. 98.
A. U. 846.

¹ We possess no continuous narrative of Domitian's reign. The epitome of Dion is peculiarly meagre and confused, and in its slight notice of the revolt of Antonius, refers its date to "about the time" of Domitian's triumph. Clinton accordingly places it in 91. Imhof, however, shows that there is reason for fixing it as late as 98. The date is important, inasmuch as all the authorities concur in remarking that it was after this event that Domitian's fears impelled him to the cruelties which make his name so infamous. See Suet. *Domit.* 10.; Dion, lxxvii. 11.; Victor, *Epit.* 11.; Comp. Tac. *Agric.* 43.

² Martial, iv. 11.:

"Dum nimium vano tumefactus nomine gaudes,
Et Saturninum te miser esse pudet,
Impia Parrhasiâ movisti bella sub ursâ,
Qualia qui Phariæ conjugis arma tulit."

If we regarded Martial's pieces as following in chronological order, we might put this event as far back as 88 with Tillemont. Victor ascribes the revolt of Antonius to private pique. Domitian had called him by an opprobrious term, yet one which seems to have been fully bandied about among the loose talkers and loose livers of the time: "se scortum vocari dolebat."

officers of his two legions,—such was the amount to which, since the recent disturbances, the forces on the Rhine had been reduced,—and the title of Emperor was conferred upon him with acclamations. Jealous as the Cæsars had long been of their lieutenants, nevertheless, in still greater jealousy of the soldiers, they had placed in their hands the pecuniary means of waging war against the state at any moment. For, in order to retain the legionary under his standards, and insure his fidelity, it was a rule of the service that a portion of his pay,—as much, it is said, as one half,—should be kept back as a reserved fund, till the period of his discharge. Even the donatives so often lavished upon the soldiers were thus intercepted on their way, and perhaps in the same proportion.¹ A large sum of ready money was thus accumulated in the military chest; and when the legions bound up their own lives and fortunes with a chief who promised to lead them to plunder, they willingly allowed him to lavish this convenient hoard on the requisite preparations. Antonius expected aid at the same time from the German bank of the Rhine, and did not scruple, it seems, to call into the field the natural enemies of Rome. The danger was imminent, and Domitian, who was not timid in the face of open dangers, prepared as on former occasions to lead his own forces against his adversary. His movements, however, were anticipated by the vigour of a faithful lieutenant. Norbanus attacked Antonius on the first opening of spring, when the sudden thaw of ice prevented the barbarians from hastening across the Rhine to his assistance.² The rebel chief was quickly

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 7. : “fiduciam cessisse ex depositorum summa videbatur.” The writer represents these deposits indeed as voluntary, which may have been partly the case; but the account given of the usual practice by Vegetius, *de Mil. Rom.* ii. 20., seems to offer a better explanation of the custom.

² Suet. *Domit.* 6. The victory, according to the marvellous story of the day, was known at Rome on the very day that it occurred in Germany. Suetonius is confirmed by Plutarch, *Æmil.* 25. Similar wonders are common in Roman, and, indeed, in all history. So of the battle of Pharsalia, according to the tradition no doubt faithfully reported by Lucan, vii. 204. : “Spectari e toto potuit Pharsalia mundo.”

routed and slain. Norbanus had perhaps personal reasons for making all traces of the conspiracy disappear, and he destroyed the papers of the vanquished before the emperor could demand them. Domitian meanwhile was advancing from Rome with a powerful force, dragging with him many senators, old as well as young, whom he dared not leave behind him in the capital. Disappointed of full information about his concealed enemies, he ex- Followed by proscriptions. tended all the more widely his precautionary severities, and sought to terrify the rebel's friends by exhibiting his head upon the Rostra. Such were the ghastly scenes with which the proscriptions of the olden time had generally commenced, and now again proscription followed; but the names of the victims were forbidden to be inscribed on the public records.¹ Another precaution against future insurrections was to forbid the soldiers keeping more than 1000 sesterces in deposit at their standards; the surplus of their accumulated arrears being removed, we may suppose, to some central quarters. It was further determined that henceforth two legions should never occupy the same winter station together.²

These jealous measures show how deep a gloom of distrust was thickening before Domitian's vision. Hitherto he had been content perhaps to indicate to the delators a few among the high nobility, who, if con- Domitian's terror and cruelty. demned with a decent show of judicial process, would be acceptable victims offered to the necessities of the fiscus. Now, however, a feeling more potent than cupidity seized and mastered him. In dire alarm for his power and his life, he saw an enemy in every man of distinction in the city or the camps; and the short career which yet remained to him became one continued paroxysm of terrified ferocity.³

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 10. describes the torments inflicted on the culprits. Dion, lxxvii. 11.: ἐκώλυσε σφᾶς ἐς τὰ ὑπομνήματα ἐσγραφῆναι.

² Suet. *Domit.* 7.: "Geminari legionum castra prohibuit: nec plus quam mille nummos a quoquam ad signa deponi." 1000 sesterces—8*l*.

³ Victor, *Epit.* 11.: "quo per Norbanum Appium acie strato Domitianus longe tetrior in omne hominum genus, etiam in suos, ferarum more grassabatur."

CHAPTER LXII.

INTERNAL HISTORY UNDER DOMITIAN.—HIS CHARACTER, AND STRENGTH OF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST IT.—HIS REIGN AN EPOCH OF REACTION.—HE AFFECTS TO BE A REFORMER OF MANNERS.—MEASURES IN HONOUR OF THE GODS.—PROSECUTION OF UNCHASTE VESTALS.—FATE OF CORNELIA.—ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS OF ADULTERY.—THE SCANTINIAN LAW.—LAWS AGAINST MUTILATION.—RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON THE MIMES.—DECREE AGAINST THE CHALDEANS AND PHILOSOPHERS, A. D. 89.—ECONOMIC MEASURES.—RESTORATION OF THE CAPITOL.—ASCRPTION OF DIVINITY TO DOMITIAN.—CULT OF ISIS AND CYBELE.—TRIBUTE ENFORCED ON THE JEWS.—DEATH OF CLEMENS, AND ALLEGED PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS.—DOMITIAN AS A GOVERNOR, ADMINISTRATOR, AND LEGISLATOR.—HE COUNTENANCES DELATION.—FAVOURS THE SOLDIERS.—CARESSES THE POPULACE.—SPECTACLES.—THE CAPITOLINE AND ALBAN CONTESTS.—PATRONAGE OF LITERATURE REPAID BY FLATTERY.—DOMITIAN'S GRIM HUMOUR.—THE COUNCIL OF THE TURBOT, AND FUNERAL BANQUET.—DEATH OF AGRICOLA, A. D. 93: WITH SUSPICION OF POISON: FOLLOWED BY PROSCRIPTION OF SENATORS, AND SECOND EDICT AGAINST THE PHILOSOPHERS.—REIGN OF TERROR.—DOMITIAN'S PERSONAL ALARMS.—HE IS ASSASSINATED BY HIS FREEDMEN, A. D. 96.

A. D. 81-96. A. U. 834-849.

SUCH are the fragments remaining from the wreck of history, which embrace what little we know of the external affairs of Rome at this period. Henceforth we must be content to work with these, or even scantier materials. More interest, if not more completeness, may, however, be given to our sketch of the Roman interior, by scrutinizing the character of the emperor's domestic administration. It happens, indeed, that the personal character of Domitian, the most conspicuous figure on the scene, reflects with peculiar fidelity the temper of the age, and affords a key to much of its history.

The character of Domitian represents that of the Romans of the age.

The degeneracy of the sons of Vespasian paints the decline of the Roman people. In the father we have seen a type of the armed citizen of the republic, a Sabine by birth and temper, a genuine representative of that middle-class which still retained the stamp of rustic simplicity, so long associated in the imagination of the Italians with the farmers of the hills, and the artisans of the country towns of Sabellia. But this native simplicity had seldom been proof against the seductions of city life. Transplanted from their cabins in the mountains to the pillared halls of the Quirinal or the Carinæ, the children of the Apennines were sure to lose, at least in the second generation, the rough coating of antique manners which preserved their moral strength and hardihood, and to adopt the vices of patrician luxury, together with its lustre and refinement. No wonder that, bred in the atmosphere of a court, the sons of the yeoman of Reate should quickly cast aside the conventional restraints of their homely childhood. In an earlier and manlier age the transformation would have been no unmixed evil. Civilization ripens the growing fruit, though it corrupts the fallen and over mellow. The sweets of polished life worked like poison in the veins of the plebeian of Rome's silver age, substituting feebleness for grace, pliancy for urbanity, vicious propensities for elegant tastes. The deterioration was more marked in the younger of the two brothers, inasmuch as he was tried and tempted at an earlier age; and accordingly, while the weakness of Titus appeared in occasional or partial defects, that of Domitian was found to pervade and leaven his whole character. The younger Flavius fell at once into that moral decrepitude to which the Roman people had been descending through many generations. With some kindly, and even generous emotions, not wholly devoid of refined tastes, and of a sound intelligence, he lacked the tenacity of fibre which strung the old Roman and Sabine fabric, and displayed no firm determination, no vigour and persistence in his designs. The nerves of the Roman people were relaxed by ages of indulgence; by sensual luxuries; by moral turpitudes; by long

loss of self-respect; and they were now generally unequal to any sustained exertion; unable even to keep long in view any arduous and noble object. The contradictions which appear in the career of the prince before us are the same we observe in the people generally. Such were his desire for military distinction combined with caprice and timidity in the pursuit of it; his literary tastes and leanings, associated with jealous impatience of the free exercise of letters; his softness and effeminacy of disposition, issuing in jealous cruelty; his love of law and discipline, distorted by wanton freaks of tyranny; his mixture of gloomy austerity with childish horse-play.¹ From this conspicuous example we may learn how unfit were the people whom he represented for the forms of self-government; how impossible self-government must always be to a nation which has corrupted itself by oppressive violence, by licentious dissipation, and by a tame renunciation of the rights and duties of political life.

There is none of the Cæsars, except perhaps Caius, against whom the evidence of history is so uniform and consistent as the younger Flavius. There may have been a conspiracy out of court; the witnesses may have been tampered with by senatorial agency. No doubt it is the duty of the judge to lean against the weight of testimony so suspiciously harmonious. But as long as he can detect no flaw in the chain of circumstance, he must leave the case, with only an admonitory caution, to the decision of the jury represented by the judgment and conscience of succeeding generations. I would content myself with recommending all the consideration that can be fairly allowed

The evidence
against Do-
mitian uniform
and consistent.

¹ Dion describes him at the same time bold and passionate, crafty and dissembling: πολλὰ μὲν ὡς σκηπτὸς ὀξέως ἐμπίπτων τοῖσιν ἐλυμαίνετο, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἐκακοῦργει, lxvii. 1. The tyrant allowed the tyrants his predecessors to be freely lashed. Thus Statius says of Caligula: "nec proximus hæres Inimicitis quanquam, et furis agitated, abegit." *Sylv.* iii. 3. 70.; of Nero still more pointedly: "pallidumque visa matris lampade respicit Neronem," *Sylv.* li. 7. 118. The *Genethliacon Lucani* is a continued protest in favour of the victim of Nero's cruelty. Comp. also, *Sylv.* v. 2. 33.

for the frightful temptations of the position. The abilities of Domitian seem to me to have been of a higher order than they are generally represented. The fulsome eulogies of some of his flatterers have perhaps injured the reputation of the man who was at least weak enough to tolerate them. When we cast an eye on the complex system of administration which embraced the vast extent of the empire, and trace all its leading threads to the imperial cabinet on the Palatine, and to the hand of the eager, impulsive, and luxurious child of fortune there installed, we must admit that the fact of such a machine being so firmly guided for so many years is itself an answer to much of the ribald scandal which connects his name with the extreme of frivolity and licentiousness. The defects of Domitian as a governor were those of eccentricity rather than feebleness, his ideas were crude and ill-conceived, misapplications of accredited theories, political anachronisms; in short, the errors of imperfect education struggling in its meshes, casting about here and there for advisers, but rejecting the control of favourites. It was observed of Domitian by a competent critic that he was well served by his ministers;¹ and the course of our history will show conclusively that of all the Cæsars he held himself most free from their control and dictation; two facts which speak with equal force for the good sense and natural ability of a despot.

The reign of Domitian was an epoch of administrative reaction, such as repeatedly occurred in the history both of the Republic and the Empire, when an attempt was made, or at least affected, to recall society to ancient principles and ideas. There is something striking in these repeated struggles of the state conscience, something even affecting in the anxiety evinced by so many of the emperors, by some who were personally among the most selfish and vicious of them, for the amend-

Domitian's
reign an epoch
of reaction.

¹ Lamprid. in *Alex. Sever.* 65. The passage is evidently corrupt, but the remark seems to be attributed to Trajan.

ment of public morals, and the restoration of a golden age of virtuous simplicity. It was the general tendency of Paganism to look backward rather than forward; and the emperors, as protectors and patrons of the religious sentiment among their people, which had no hope for the future, instinctively directed its regretful yearnings towards the past.

Domitian was, moreover, a disciplinarian by birth and breeding. The early household training of the Roman citizen still made itself felt in his temper and bearing, however surprising might be the revolution in the circumstances of his family. The antique

Domitian affects a reformation of manners.

severity of Sabellia had been celebrated from primitive times: Vespasian had retained on the throne of the world the homely manners of his rude stock. The sons, especially the younger, while they cast off the manners, retained in no slight degree the traditions and prejudices of their fathers. Domitian was not deterred by any sense of his own vices from the attempt to reform the morals of his countrymen. He had forfeited none of the Sabine faith in temperance and chastity, by his personal indulgence in the grossest excesses. Less subtle than Augustus, less an imitator than Claudius, his projects of revival sprang with more genuine impulse from his own heart, than those of either of his predecessors. He had no need of the sanctimonious pretensions which cast on Augustus the taint, or at least the suspicion of hypocrisy. The empire which the first princeps founded on a moral sentiment was now firmly fixed, and the citizens had learnt to acquiesce in the decay of manners as the law of their destiny. Domitian's attempts at reform were unquestionably sincere; he had no political interest to serve by alarming the national conscience; but his measures sprang from a morbid taste for petty discipline. Nor was his rigid religionism the bastard product of a seared heart and a troubled conscience; it was not the despairing effort of the startled sinner to slake the furies of remorse by a bloody propitiation. It was rather a mixture of vanity and fanaticism engendered by the prophecies and portents which

His zeal for the purity of the vestal virgins.

had heralded the elevation of his house, and by the fortune which had saved him in the crisis of a godless anarchy, and made him the instrument for restoring the patrons of Rome to their august abodes. Scarcely was Domitian seated on his throne when he began to hold his inquest as chief pontiff on the irregularities imputed to certain of the Sacred Virgins. The fire on the altar of Vesta, the mysterious patroness of the commonwealth, had been tended from the earliest ages by a college of pure maidens, devoted to the solemn duty by the noblest parents, honoured with every mark of outward deference, bound by the most awful sanctions to preserve their virtue unsullied till advancing years should release them from their honourable servitude. To such purity, such sanctity, the mere idea of death was repugnant. The culprit for whom they interceded must be pardoned; the criminal on whom they barely cast their eyes on his way to the scaffold, must be exempted from the penalty of his delinquencies. But on the other hand the punishment of guilt in one so honoured must be signal; the sinner must be cut off from the land of the living, and hidden away from the sight of her fellow-creatures. The blood of the wanton vestal was not to be shed by man; the sword of earthly justice must not fall upon her; a higher tribunal demanded a more solemn and appalling sentence. No corpse could be buried in the city; but in placing the Vestal's tomb at a spot within the walls the Romans seemed to violate no legal principle, for she descended alive into the earth.¹ The horrid rite was said to have been originally sanctioned by Numa, and tradition told of its having been more than once enacted in the first and brightest ages of the republic. But though amidst the relaxation of later manners, the sacred ministers of the pure goddess were less than ever exempt from infirmity, the sacrifice had been rarely repeated, and for more than two centuries wholly disused.² It was generally under the pressure of a

¹ The ritualists explained this mode of execution as an offering to Vesta, who was identified with Tellus, the goddess of the earth. Ovid. *Fast.* iv. 459.

² The case of Opimia occurred A. U. 273; that of Urbinia 284. Dion. Hal.

public calamity, such as a pestilence, or the occurrence of evil omens, that the priests had calmed or attempted to calm the terror of the citizens by decreeing this fearful expiation; and a victim sought with such a purpose was sure to be found. Had Nero been a religious reformer he would doubtless have required the sacrifice of a Vestal after the burning of the city. Fortunately that monster of cruelty was not superstitious. But Rome had now a tyrant who was cruel and superstitious also. And with his superstition was mingled perhaps some feeling of spite towards his father and brother, with whom he always maintained a tacit rivalry. He complained that his predecessors had relaxed from the old prescriptions of religion, and had neglected the due propitiation of the national divinities. The burning of the Capitol, twice repeated, had demanded a signal expiation, and no such expiation had been made. Domitian in-
Inquisition into their character. quired into the conduct of the Sacred Virgins; the inquisition was carried back to past years; two members of the college were denounced, examined, and convicted; but the temper of the age was supposed to be averse from the literal execution of the frightful penalty, and, instead of being buried alive, the culprits were allowed to kill themselves. Their paramours, who might have been scourged to death in the comitium, were graciously permitted to retire into banishment.¹ Domitian had been personally intent on a prosecution from which he expected great glory to redound on his administration; thus far public opinion was undoubtedly with him, and encouraged him to proceed in his investigations.² A third victim, named Cornelia, was soon brought

Ant. Rom. viii. 89., ix. 40. Livy mentions the sentence against Flronia in 536, which she seems to have escaped by flight, xxii. 57.: and a still later instance is recorded by Dion in 640. See Reimar on Dion, lxvii. 3.

¹ *Suet. Domit.* 8. It is with reference to these cases apparently that Domitian boasted, according to Dion, of his clemency in not exacting the full penalty of the law. *Dion*, lvii. 3.: ἡγάλλετο ὅτι τὰς ἀειπαρθένους ὡς ἡνδρωμένας οὐ κατ' ὥρυξεν, ἀλλὰ ἄλλως ἀποθνήσκειν ἐκέλευσε.

² Even Apollonius the philosopher, in the biography of Philostratus, seems

before him, whose fate is recorded in a letter of the younger Pliny, in which the dreadful details of these barbarities are vividly related.¹

Cornelia buried
alive.

A. D. 91.

Domitian, advancing from horror to horror, now determined to exact the penalty in all its atrocity. The culprit was condemned and duly entombed alive, with a crust and a flask of water, in a vault prepared for her. The narrator is moved indeed to pity in his account of the poor creature's protestations of innocence; yet even he feels more keenly the arrogance of the chief pontiff in summoning his priests to his imperial villa at Alba, instead of the official mansion in the forum, than the abominable cruelty of the sentence itself. The alleged partner of the crime, a Roman knight, was scourged to death, protesting his innocence also; a prætorian, named Licinianus, who was suspected of criminality with her, but against whom proof seemed to fail, was induced to make a confession, upon which his escape from the city was connived at. Domitian feared that he had shown too great eagerness to convict; and on the culprit's avowal exclaimed with evident satisfaction, that he was now himself acquitted. Licinianus was allowed to remain in banishment, and some portion of his property was reserved from confiscation. Such however was the sympathy of the people with these propitiatory sacrifices, that even after Domitian's fall, the virtuous Nerva, his successor, did not think proper to recall the exile.²

The zeal of Domitian in this matter was actuated not by a moral, but by a religious feeling. He was concerned for

to approve of the emperor's pious severity, vii. 6.: καὶ μὴν καὶ λόγον ἀφικομένον ὡς λαμπρὰν κάθαρσιν εἰη Δομετιανὸς πεποιημένος τῆς Ρωμαίων Ἑστίας εἰ γὰρ καὶ σὺ, ἔφη, καθαρθεῖης, "Ἦλπε, τῶν ἀδίκων φόνων ὧν πᾶσα ἡ οἰκουμένη μεστὴ νῦν.

¹ Plin. *Ep.* iv. 11. Eusebius gives the date A. D. 91., but in *Chron. Pasch.* the event stands two years earlier. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* in ann. 91.

² Plin. l. c.: "exilium molle velut præmium dedit. Ex quo tamen postea clementia divi Nervæ translatus est in Siciliam, ubi nunc proficetur." He supported himself by teaching rhetoric.

Domitian enforces the laws of adultery.

the maintenance of an ancient cult, not for the preservation of personal chastity. The purity of the vestals was dear to the gods, and the sovereign pleasure of the gods must be shielded from outrage by human disobedience. But next to the purity of the Sacred Virgins, the gods fixed the seal of their approval on the purity of married life, when it had once been consecrated by the sanctions of certain specific ceremonies. The sole object of the laws against adultery, prescribed by Augustus, and enforced from time to time by his successors, was to conciliate the divine patrons of the married state, and we must not confound the imperial legislation on this subject with the attempts of later rulers, under the influence of Christian ideas, to repress sins of incontinency and elevate the morals of society. Amidst the degradation of manners at this period, the citizens themselves seem to have been but imperfectly aware of their master's real aim. The old religious ideas were dissolving, and some vague moral instincts rising, at the same time, into greater prominence among them, while their ruler was personally actuated only by the desire of reviving the old ideas, and was utterly incapable of sympathy with the new. The sins of Domitian, freely cited against him in pasquinade and innuendo, were gross moral delinquencies;¹ but he was a blameless worshipper of the divinities of the Capitol. He might live in incestuous intercourse with his own brother's daughter after her widowhood; but he had stiffly declined to marry her as a virgin, and contract a union which, though sanctioned by a recent enactment, was fundamentally opposed to the principles of the state religion. When he upheld and enforced the law of adultery, the satirist might assert that such new-fangled strictness was enough to terrify the licentious deities of Olympus; but Mars and Venus were not transgressors of the Julian law, and Vulcan had not taken his celestial spouse

¹ Pliny, l. c. scoffs at the zeal for purity of a judge, who was said to live in incest with his own niece: "cum ipse fratris filiam incesto . . . polluisset." Comp. *Panegy.* 52. 63.

with the holy rites of confarreation.¹ Even Domitian's false principles were better than none at all. The dawn of better things, however, was beginning to break, and the heathens were feeling their way with doubt and hesitation towards it. The twelfth of the Cæsars was the last of the reactionary emperors; from henceforth their attempts at moral reformation began to look forward instead of backward; they made their appeal to the moral sense of man, in its gradual development, not to the effete traditions of an antique theology. The enforcement of the Julian law produced the punishment of some culprits of distinction; the crime of defamation was prosecuted with renewed severity against both men and women of the highest rank; the revival of the Scantinian enactments against a disgusting form of vice, which the law, much to its honour, had branded from ancient times, may have excited still further surprise and indignation.² It is true that in the later years of the republic the penalty of death was commuted in these cases to a fine of only a thousand sesterces, and the crime itself was limited to acts of incontinency between Roman citizens. Here too, it was not the moral turpitude that the law regarded, but solely the violation of a political enactment. No delinquency was imputed to the stranger, no protection was thrown over the slave. The excesses of Domitian himself, which he allowed his court poets to deck with their choicest verses, were no violation of the principle which he now recalled into operation.³ The subject is one on which it is impossible to dwell; but a passing allusion may suffice to explain the apparent confusion of prudery and licentiousness which reigned in the minds of the Roman

Enforcement
of the Scanti-
nian law.

¹ Juvenal, ii. 29.

"Qualis erat nuper tragico pollutus adulter
Concubitu, qui tum leges revocabat amaras
Omnibus, atque ipsis Veneri Martique timendas."

² Suet. *Domit.* 8.; Dion, lxxvii. 12.

³ Statius, *Sylv.* iii. 4.

And of laws
against mutila-
tion.

legislators. In one direction indeed, and one only, Domitian seems to have deviated from his usual recurrence to ancient prescriptions, and to have acted on the motion of a more enlightened moral conscience.¹ No Roman legislator before him had forbidden the detestable practice of human mutilation. This iniquity had been from early times the opprobrium of the East; and so much had men's feelings been blunted to the degradation it inflicted, that eunuchs had been allowed to sit upon the throne of Persia.² So abhorrent however had it been to the manlier sentiment of the West, that amid all the abominations to which the Romans had debased themselves, here at least they had maintained the rights of nature and humanity long after the more effeminate Greeks had cast off the last restraints of self-respect. The custom of buying young slaves thus foully treated had been introduced into the palace from the example of the Asiatic courts, probably by Caius, the first imperial imitator of Oriental depravities; but Claudius, with his habitual recurrence to national usage, had perhaps resisted it, and had brought some impertinent remarks on himself by his regard for decorum if not for principle. Under Nero the fashion had again flourished, and spread from the palace to the mansions of the nobility. Seneca declaims with petu-

¹ The insinuation that Domitian had no other motive than to cast a reflection on his predecessor seems unreasonable. Dion, lxxvii. 2. The emperor's contemporaries may be suspected of flattery, as Martial, vi. 2., and elsewhere, and Statius, *Sylv.* iv. 3. 13.; but Ammianus Marcellinus expresses the deliberate judgment of a much later age: "juvat veterem laudare Domitianum, qui receptissima inclaruit lege, qua minaciter interdixerat ne intra terminos jurisdictionis Romanæ castraret quisquam puerum," xviii. 4.

² Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xiii. 9. Comp. the story of Bagoas, Diod. Sic. xvii. 5. Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv. 6., attributes the invention to Semiramis. Comp. Claudian, in *Eutrop.* i. 339. Periander of Corinth was the first to introduce it into Greece, Herod. iii. 49. And it was from Greece, or the Greek monarchies in Asia, that the Romans no doubt adopted it, though they were pleased to impute this corruption of their manners to their intercourse with Parthia. Claudian, in *Eutrop.* i. 415.: "Arsacio postquam se regia fastu sustulit, et nostros corruptit Parthia mores."

lance rather than indignation against it; Pliny, with more dignity, is silent upon the odious subject.¹ In the writings of Martial, Statius, and Juvenal, it becomes obtrusively prominent. Domitian himself had his miserable favourites, and the custom he pretended to denounce was never abandoned in the high places of the empire till it was again forbidden by Christian legislators.²

This edict was intended to curb the shameless luxury of the great, and restore the modest dignity of ancient manners among the senators and nobles. In order to brace the morals of the lower ranks, our reformer revived the laws of his predecessors against the instruments of more vulgar pleasures, the singers and dancers of the theatres, whose contentions or rather the contentions of whose patrons and partisans, had troubled the police of the city for many generations. Augustus had issued proclamations to control these noxious artists, and Tiberius had banished them from Rome. They were denounced to the guardian of public virtue, not untruly, as corrupters of the women as well as violators of the peace of the city. But these attempts had signally failed. Under Nero the factions of the theatre and the circus had filled the streets with tumult and bloodshed. The mimes found no doubt a protector in the prince of mimes, but in fact the passion of the populace for these performances had always defeated the legislation of the reformers. Vespasian seems to have desisted from what he deemed a futile proscription. It was not till Domitian's accession to power that another serious effort was made to impose a check on these disorders. The measures of this prince were moderate, and perhaps the circumstances of the times favoured his interference. The increasing extent and frequency of the shows in the amphitheatres, the introduction of new and grosser

Measures
against the
mimes.

¹ Senec. *Epist.* 95. 24.; *De Brev. Vit.* 12. 4.

² The edict of Domitian was repeated in later times, showing that the practice was not eradicated. See the *Digest.* xlviii. 8. 384. Comp. also Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 29. The legislation of the Christian emperors on the subject is reviewed by Wallon, *Hist. de l'Esclavage*, &c., Pt. iii. ch. x.

forms of public amusement, may have weaned the populace from the more refined diversions of dancing and singing. To the smaller class who still retained a taste for art and elegance, the emperor allowed the gratification of witnessing the ballet in their private houses, and he was satisfied with merely forbidding such performances in public.¹ From this time the regulations against the mimes were alternately enforced and suspended; but no such scandal seems again to have arisen from them as in the first century of the empire. Domitian had also his personal favourites among this profession, and allowed them easy access to his person. Such was Latinus, who boasted that his manners were untainted by the dissoluteness common to his associates, and that he was a player only upon the stage.² Such too was Paris, a man of greater note, the Roscius of the empire, who seems to have justified the imputation cast on his profession of corrupting female morals, if the story be true that he was the notorious paramour of Domitio, and was at last waylaid and assassinated in the streets, on that account, by the emperor's orders. Domitian hardly refrained, in the first access of passion, from inflicting death upon his consort also. As a noble Roman he could not do less than solemnly divorce her; but he did not long endure the separation, and presently recalled her to the palace pretending that the people required it.³ His rage,

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 7.: "interdixit histrionibus scenam, intra domum quidem exercendi artem jure concessio." On the other hand, he added two *factions*, the golden and the purple, to the four already established in the circus. Suet. l. c.; Dion, lxxvii. 4.

² Suet. *Domit.* 15.: Martial, l. 5., ix. 29., who makes him say of himself:

"sola scenicus arte feror:

Nec poteram gratus domino sine moribus esse."

Latinus, however, had other recommendations to imperial favour, if, as is conjectured, he was the delator of Juvenal, i. 35., vi. 44.

³ Dion, lxxvii. 3.; Suet. *Domit.* 3. Dion mentions the divorce under the year 83 (the 9th consulship of Domitian), and the date of so solemn an act must have been well known. But this was at least ten years from the marriage, and Domitian was supposed to have been long carrying on his intercourse with Julia, which he continued after receiving his wife back.

however, against the seducer was not appeased even by the death of the victim. He seized and chastised the unfortunate player's admirers, when they assembled on the spot where he had fallen, and strewed it with flowers. Some indeed ascribe the edict against the mimes to this personal mortification; but we must guard ourselves against the proneness of our authorities to find a special motive for every occurrence of the times. The prohibition was more probably part of the settled policy already noticed. Thus when a quæstorian senator ventured to appear on the stage, an irregularity against which Augustus, as we have seen, had so earnestly contended, Domitian revived the precedent of the first imperial reformer, and expelled the offender from the illustrious order.¹

The same jealousy with which the government had so long regarded the licentiousness of the stage, had been extended even from an earlier period, to the Chaldæans and astrologers, the men of occult science, who agitated society with visions and predictions, and filled with nefarious intrigues the families of the citizens. Every interdiction on players and dancers was accompanied with a proclamation against the *mathematici*. Vespasian's practical good sense had tolerated this class also; for the evil, if repressed in one shape, was sure, as he knew, to spring up in another. The diviners indeed deserved some favour from the adventurer whom their breath had seemed to waft to fortune. But Domitian, the third of his dynasty, might fear every portent of change, which to him could only be a change from good to evil. In common with all the princes who succeeded to an hereditary throne, he was induced to regard the prophets as his natural enemies.² It is impossible to say to what extent the astrologers

Edicts against
the astrologers
and the philoso-
phers.

A. D. 89.
A. U. 842.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 8.: "quæstorium virum, quod gesticulandi saltandique studio teneretur, movit senatu." Dion. lxxvii. 13., adds the name Cæcilius Rufinus. I presume that the culprit exhibited himself in public.

² Tertullian pertinently asks: "cui autem opus est perscrutari super Cæsaris salute, nisi a quo aliquid adversus illum cogitatur vel optatur?" *Apolo-*
log. 35. Senec. *Ludus in Morte Claud.* c. 3.: "mathematicos, qui illum, ex

and the philosophers were now connected together: Apollonius of Tyana, for instance, one of the greatest moral teachers of the time, appears to us, even in the pages of his own biographer, as a diviner and a thaumaturge; it is possible, however, that his character in this respect is misrepresented by the injudicious admiration of a less intelligent age. But enough intimacy subsisted, doubtless, between the two classes to excite the jealousy of the government, and to induce Domitian to renew his father's decrees against the professors of Grecian wisdom. It does not appear indeed that he was more stringent in his measures than his predecessor. The expelled philosophers assembled without molestation in the Campanian villas of their noble patrons, and even under the walls of the city.¹ Probably some special exceptions were made, and a more distant banishment required in the case of the more turbulent or more notoriously disaffected. A much greater outcry was raised against the illiberality of Domitian than against that of his father; but whether this was owing to the greater severity of his measures, or the detestation in which he was generally held, may be still a question.²

quo princeps factus est, omnibus annis, omnibus mensibus efferunt." Comp. Dubois de Guchan, *Tacite et son siècle*, i. 515.

¹ Pliny, *Epist.* iii. 11., speaks of visiting one of the banished philosophers "in Suburbano." "Equidem cum essent philosophi ab urbe submoti, fui apud illum in Suburbano, et quo notabilius hoc periculosiusque esset, fui Prætor." In the life of Apollonius, vii. 11., Demetrius, Apollonius, and others are represented as discoursing, during this period, in Cicero's Cumæan villa: "Happy insects," exclaimed one of them, on hearing the grasshoppers chirping, "that can sing your old song, free from the jealousy of tyrants, from sensual passions, from envy," &c. Yet only a few pages before, (c. 4.) the biographer had represented many at least of the class as flying to Gaul, Africa and the deserts of Scythia for safety.

² The *forcible-feeble* satire of Sulpicia supplies a fair measure of the importance to be attached to this act of the government, which seems to have been much exaggerated; as, for instance, in that gush of laboured rhetoric:

"Dic mihi Calliope, quidnam pater ille deorum
Cogitat? an terras et patria sæcula mutat,
Quasque dedit quondam morientibus eripit artes?
Nosque jubet tacitos, et jam rationis egenos,

To give an antique colour to these proceedings, and remind the citizens of the long-accredited principles on which they were founded, Domitian had assumed from an early period the office of censor, which he continued to hold, contrary to all precedent, throughout the remainder of his reign.¹ By repeated enactments he endeavoured to drill his subjects, at least within the city, to the maintenance of external decorum; he regulated their dress, their behaviour, their places in the theatres; he attempted to preserve, amidst the mass of nations and habits fermenting around him, an image of the ancient republic, which should attract the eye both of gods and men, and engage the favour of the one and the reverence of the other. Such were the points to which, as we have repeatedly seen, the attention of all the imperial reformers was directed, and Domitian may have had a personal motive to quicken his zeal from the wish to connect himself, as the representative of a new dynasty, with the traditions of the families which had ruled by right divine before him. But, often as we have noticed the recurrence of measures for the regulation of manners, we seldom meet with an instance of legal interference with economical interests. The government of Domitian, however, is distinguished by a sumptuary edict of this character, which cannot fail to attract observation. It gives us a glimpse, at least, of the attitude assumed by the state towards industry, whether as its patron or its oppressor. We have discovered already more than one symptom of the decay of wealth among the nobles of Rome. This decay was

Domitian assumes the censorship, and institutes reforms.

Non aliter quam cum primo surreximus ævo,
Glandibus et puræ rursus procumbere lymphæ?"

The specific cases of punishment were those of declaimers or conspirers against the government, such as Māternus; Dion, lxxvii. 12. Two edicts were issued in 89 and 93, 94. Euseb. *Chron.*, Tac. *Ag.* 2., Dion, lxxvii. 13.; and the last seems to have followed on the suppression of the Antonian revolt.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 8.; Dion, lxxvii. 4.: *τιμητῆς διὰ βίου πρώτος καὶ μόνος καὶ ιδιώτων καὶ ἀνοκρατόρων ἐχειροτονήθη.* Comp. Statius, *Sylv.* iv. 3. 13.; Martial, vi. 4.: "Censor maxime, principumque princeps."

undoubtedly in continual progress, and was now plainly apparent in portions even of Italy. In the great towns and the more favoured districts of the coast or inland, it was disguised by a vast display of borrowed magnificence, the outlay of rent or tribute from every quarter of the globe; and the government had sought anxiously to conceal it, by attracting the wealthiest of its subjects to the neighbourhood of the capital, and fixing them with their liberal expenditure in the centre of the empire. Meanwhile the operation of natural laws was constantly working in a contrary direction. The wasteful and expensive processes of slave labour were devouring the capital of the proprietors, not in Italy only, but in all the seats of the oldest civilization, especially in Greece, and the lesser Asia. This decline was at the same time hastened by the demands of the government on certain provinces, such as Africa, Spain, Gaul and Britain, where the productiveness of the soil was generally developed by the hands of free coloni. Accordingly, not in Italy only, but in Greece and Asia, the production of corn had materially diminished, and fertile land had been withdrawn from the plough; but in its place many a ridge of barren hill-side had been scarp'd and terraced for the vineyard. Wine, the produce hitherto of some limited districts of the empire, was becoming more and more the common beverage of the whole population in every province, and demanded an ever-increasing area for its production. It would seem, therefore, that the great change which had thus occurred in the economical circumstances of different parts of the Roman world, was the natural result of their amalgamation in one body politic, and the nearly uniform system of law and impost that prevailed throughout it. We may conclude that the complaints we have heard of the decay of agriculture were only partially true, and do not fairly represent the actual state of the whole empire.

It was not to be expected, however, that the statesmen of Rome should take a broad and scientific view of interests so

A decline of
wealth begins
to be perceived
in Italy.

widely extended, and so complex in their nature, and we need not wonder at the confusion into which they fell, in seeking a remedy for evils of which they saw neither the causes nor the compensations, nor, indeed, are our accounts sufficiently intelligent or explicit, to enable us to understand the real action of the government, still less to penetrate its motives. A strange story is reported, on the trifling authority of Philostratus in his life of Apollonius, that Domitian forbade the cultivation of the vine in the Ionian provinces, because, forsooth, wine excited the people to tumults and seditions.¹ He commanded, not only that no more vines should be planted, but that the existing plantations should be rooted up. The Ionians, it is added, sent a deputation to Rome to plead for the industry by which they subsisted, and the sophist Scopelianus, whom they employed to argue for them, was so successful that the decree was rescinded, and penalties denounced against those who should neglect the cultivation of the vine in future. It seems more likely that this edict was part of a general measure, such as that indicated by Suetonius, by which the emperor, alarmed at the increasing dearth of corn and cheapness of wine, prohibited the withdrawal of arable land from the plough in Italy, and restricted the cultivation of the vine throughout the provinces to one half at most of the extent to which it had been developed.² If such an arbitrary regulation was ever seriously meant to be enforced, it is plain that it could not have been really executed, nor could the emperor himself be long deceived by the erroneous principles on which it was founded. He soon desisted from the attempt. The

Edict respecting the cultivation of the vine.

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* vi. 42.: comp. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 12. To this edict and to that which enforced the Julian law, the temperate philosopher declared himself equally indifferent: *μόνος γὰρ ἀνθρώπων οὐτ' αἰδοίων δέομαι οὐτ' οἶνον*. Vespasian, according to Philostratus, had deprived the Greek cities of their autonomy on account of their turbulence.

² Suet. *Domit.* 7.: "ne quis in Italia novellaret, atque in provinciis vineta exciderentur, relicta, ubi plurimum, dimidia parte: nec exsequi rem perseveravit."

remembrance of it was chiefly preserved by the pungent epigram of Evenus, which declared that extirpate the vine as he might, there should still remain wine enough to pour a libation on the imperial victim.¹ The culture of the vine continued however to depend on the favour of the government. Thus we read at a later period, of the emperor Probus granting such an indulgence to certain of the northern provinces.² The senate long before, expressly for the advantage of the Italian vine-growers, but possibly with the further object of stimulating the growth of corn in its dependencies, proscribed the cultivation of the vine throughout the transalpine regions.³

As regarded the observance of religious forms, Domitian seems to have felt it incumbent on him to follow closely in the steps of Augustus. Thus he repeated, as we have seen, after a lapse of only forty-one years, the celebration of the secular games by Claudius, pleading perhaps that more than a century had elapsed since that solemn ceremony had been performed by the founder of the empire.⁴ He enacted with dignity the part of censor and

Domitian's
buildings in
Rome.

¹ I cannot, with some critics, cite the line quoted above, "Glandibus et puræ rursus procumbere lymphæ," as a reference to this edict. The epigram of Evenus is a well-known parody on an older couplet:

κῆν με φάγῃς ἐπὶ ῥίζαν, ὅμως ἔτι καρποφορήσω
ὅσον ἐπισπείσαι Καίσαρι θοομένῳ. *Anthol.* i. 97. Jacobs.

² Eutrop. ix. 17.: "vineas Gallos et Pannonios habere permisit." Vopiscus in *Prob.* 18.: "Gallis omnibus et Hispanis et Britannis hic permisit ut vites haberent, vinumque conficerent."

³ Cicero, *de Republ.* iii. 9.: "nos vero justissimi homines, qui transalpinas gentes oleam et vitem serere non sinimus, quo pluris sint nostra oliveta, nostræque vineæ." It is evident that this interdict did not long continue in force.

⁴ Suet. *Domit.* 4.: Censorin. *de Die Nat.* 17.: Tac. *Ann.* xi. 11. The secular games of Domitian are referred to his fourteenth consulship, *i. e.*, A. U. C. 841. Eckhel, vi. 384.: Clinton, sub. ann. On this occasion Tacitus officiated as one of the college of Quindecimvirs. He was also Prætor at the time. "Domitianus edidit ludos sæculares, iisque intentius affui sacerdotio quindecimvirali præditus ac tum prætor." Comp. *Hist.* i. 1. "dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim."

chief pontiff, and visited with stern reproof every appearance of disrespect to the gods and their temples. When one of his own freedmen ventured to make use of some pieces of marble, destined for re-building the Capitol, for a monument to his son, he caused the monument to be destroyed, and flung the remains of the buried child into the sea.¹ The wondrous preservation he had himself experienced in the sack of the sacred fane, seems to have sunk deeply into his mind, and fancying himself the special object of divine protection, he made genuine efforts to repay the obligation with lavish expenditure. It was his privilege to retrieve the disasters which had befallen the empire under a father and brother less favoured than himself. To him it fell to complete a second restoration of the national temple, and the splendour with which he executed the blessed work far exceeded the modest dignity with which his staid predecessors had proposed to invest the edifice. Plutarch had himself seen lying at Athens columns of bright Pentelic marble, of exquisite proportions, which were brought to Rome, and there, as he complains, chiselled, scraped and polished, and reduced to an ungraceful slenderness. The ornamentation of the edifice was of the most lavish character.² The gilding of the bronze tiles with which it was covered was the gift of Domitian; the estimate we have received of its amount, even if we include in it the gilding of the bases and capitals of the pillars, and of the innumerable statues which crowded the precincts, exceeds belief.³ But the restoration of the Capi-

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 8.

² Plutarch. *Poplic.* 15. οἱ δὲ κίονες . . . ἐν τῇ Ῥωμῇ πληγέντες αἰθῆς καὶ ἀναξυσθέντες, οὐ τοσούτον ἔσχον γλαφυρίας ὅσον ἀπώλεσαν συμμετρίας, πέρα τοῦ καλοῦ διάκενοι καὶ λαγαροὶ φανέντες.

³ Plutarch assures us that the gilding, ἡ χρύσωσις, amounted to 12,000 talents, which, according to the ordinary computation of about 200*l.* to the talent, would amount to 2,400,000*l.*, and says that this immense sum exceeded any private fortune at Rome. Stilicho, at the beginning of the fourth century, stripped the doors of some of their gold plating; and Genseric, in the sack of Rome, 455, carried off further spoils from the Capitol; but the gilding of the roof continued for many centuries to be a conspicuous ornament of

tol was not the only monument of Domitian's piety. The recent fire had left many sacred sites desolate, both on the Capitoline and in the Campus. Augustus might have led the way; but he would have required his wealthy nobles to follow; and many of them would have competed gallantly with him in the display of patriotism and liberality. Such times were now past. The shrunken revenues of the magnates of Rome could not vie with the fiscus of the emperor, nor could the nobles even modestly imitate their prince's generosity. Domitian had no Agrippa, no Pollio, no Mæcenas, no Taurus, to erect temples for the gods, or halls, theatres, and baths for the public. The universal patron was Cæsar. Several buildings, both religious and secular, were restored or constructed by Domitian; among them a temple of Minerva in the Campus, and another in the Forum Transitorium, a temple of Isis and Serapis, to which we may add a restoration or repair of the Pantheon. The Diribitorium, the great hall of Agrippa, which boasted a roof of the widest span in the ancient world, had suffered in the fire of Titus, and the second century of the empire lacked skill or energy to cover it again.¹ This, however, seems to have been the only instance of acknowledged inferiority. On the contrary, from this time forward the emperors continued to adorn the city with new works, the size and splendour of which increased with every generation; but these were the works of the emperors only.

But with all his zeal for the honour of the national divinities, the chief of the Roman people could not fail to remark that none of their deities was so present to their minds as an object of regard and veneration, as the person of the prince himself, their august patron and protector. A feeling of mysterious awe attached

Ascription of
the divine
character to
Domitian.

the city, and contributed to give her the name "Urbs aurea," which she retained late into the middle ages. Gregorovius, *Gesch. der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter*, i. 41.

¹ Dion, lxxv. 8.: ἦν δὲ οἶκος μέγιστος τῶν πωπότε μίαν ὁροφὴν ἐχόντων· νῦν γὰρ δὴ, τῆς στέγης αὐτοῦ καθαυρεθείσης, ὅτι οὐκ ἠδύνηθη αὐτῆς συνστήναι, ἀχανὲς ἐστίν.

to the living principle which seemed to animate the conduct of human affairs from the centre to the circumference of the empire, and this feeling was easily lost in religious devotion to the visible chief of the state. Domitian followed the bias of the times in sanctioning more openly than hitherto the outward expression of Cæsar-worship. The recognition of his father and brother as divinities, already cordially accepted, made it scarcely possible to distinguish the nature of the dead and the living members of the same celestial house. No other emperor had succeeded to an actual father and brother. No other emperor except Titus himself had even descended directly from a deified ancestor.¹ Accordingly the notion of Domitian's participation, even while yet alive, in the divine nature, was instinctively admitted by the vague superstitious feelings of the people. It was the pleasure, and still more the interest of courtiers and parasites to foster and exaggerate this feeling; but even Statius and Martial generally confine themselves to oblique insinuations, and leave the direct inference to the reader's imagination. Domitian had thronged the narrow precincts of the Capitoline hill with statues of himself, which thus jostling the most venerable images of the national gods, challenged the worship of the devotees of Jupiter. And so the poets contrived to mingle the idea of the emperor as Ruler, Father, Tarpeian and Capitoline, with that of the Greatest and Best of beings, who was adored under the same appellations. They described his statues as eternal, a pretty strong intimation that he was eternal himself. They styled his works, his exploits, his verses divine, a pretty clear avowal of the divinity which was supposed to animate their author.² Still the emperor refrains from claiming divine honours. While he allows victims to be slaughtered before his statues, and even the beasts which were driven towards the temples to be stopped on the way and sacrificed to his own images, while he raises

¹ Plin. *Panegy.* 11.: "Vespasianum Titus, Titum Domitianus (dicavit coelo); sed ille ut Dei filius, hic ut frater videretur."

² Martial, v. 5.: "Ad Capitolini coelestia carmina belli."

to heaven not only his brother, who had worn the purple, but his infant child, who had attained to no popular veneration, he abstains from erecting a temple to himself, or placing his own altar by the side of the altars of the Flavian divinities.² If, however, it was only under the veil of a rhetorical figure that the citizens might claim to address their ruler as God, they professed to be delighted at the sense and natural piety of strangers, who were scared by no conventional scruples from the simple effusion of their enthusiastic adoration.³ If Domitian is not a god in the abstract, he is at least as a god to the Romans.⁴ The government of the terrestrial globe is a delegation from the Powers of Olympus to the Power of Rome, while yet he lives the life of a man among men.⁵ Domitian and his consort represent to Roman eyes the Ausonian Jupiter and Juno.⁶ The object of all this flattery favoured the illusion with deliberate affectation.

¹ Thus Dion expressly declares that no temple, even in his day, had been raised to a living emperor in Rome or Italy, to no emperor, at least, "of any consideration:" ἐφ' ὅποσονοῦν λόγου τίνος ἄξιον, as if to exclude Caligula. Dion, li. 20. The only child of Domitian (born A. D. 82, Euseb. *Chronic.*), which died in infancy, appears on coins as "divus Aug. fil." Comp. Sil. Ital. iii. 629.: "Siderei juxta radiabunt tempora nati;" and Stat. *Sylv.* i. 1. 97.:

"Ibit in amplexus natus, fraterque, paterque,

Et soror; una locum cervix dabit omnibus astris;"

from which it would appear that a sister had been canonized also. Comp. Suet. *Vesp.* 3.: Gruter, ccclxvi. 4.

² Martial, v. 3. on the adoration of the Dacian Degis.

³ Martial, vii. 2.: "nostri mente calens Dei." Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* iv. proœm.

⁴ Statius, *Sylv.* v. i. 37.:

"Notat ista Deus qui flectit habenas

Orbis, et humanos propior Jove digerit actus."

⁵ Statius, *Sylv.* iii. 4. 18.: "Jupiter Ausonius, pariter Romanque Juno," Comp. Martial, ix. 37.: "Phryx puer alterius gaudia nota Jovis." Both Augustus and Tiberius had been represented in statues and cameos as the earthly Jupiter. See Mongez, *Icon. Rom.* pl. 19, 22, 26. Müller, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, p. 47, 50. So Germanicus and Agrippina appear in cameo as Triptolemus and Ceres, Livia as Cybele. Possibly all these are provincial symbolisms.

When he took back his wife after the divorce, he declared that he had restored her, not to his pillow, as a mortal might say, but to his sacred cushion; he encouraged the mob of the theatres to hail him and the empress as *Our Lord and Lady*; and, finally, he suffered his procurator to style him, in a public document, *Our Lord and God*. The daring phrase was eagerly caught up and popularly repeated.¹

It was, no doubt, a pleasant conceit of Martial's, that when Domitian replaced the head of a colossal Hercules with his own celestial countenance, the jealousy of Juno was at last appeased by the happy metamorphosis. But these pretensions to divinity, whether received in earnest, or handled in joke, led naturally to a terrible consequence. Every act which could be construed into disrespect to the prince became, when viewed through this fatal medium, impiety and sacrilege. Thus, an unfortunate citizen, who complained, in the amphitheatre, of the emperor's partiality to one of the combatants, was seized and thrown into the arena for blasphemy.² The case is all the worse, if, as seems too probable, the common feeling of the spectators assented to this arbitrary interpretation. But the consciousness, no doubt, of their self-degradation made the Roman people as jealous of one another as was their master of them. The slaves of Domitian could not bear that any of their fellow men should walk erect and independent. We may remark how differently certain creeds and cults were now regarded, on which the popular theology might be expected to look with equal jealousy. Isis and Cybele became henceforth fully naturalized at Rome; they were accepted as allies of the indigenous divinities, with whom they were content to exercise a divided sovereignty.³ The charges of effemi-

Disrespect to
the emperor
treated as blas-
phemy.

Cult of Isis
and Cybele
naturalized at
Rome.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 13. Comp. Martial, viii. 2. 6.; Aurel. Victor, *Cæs.* 11.; Dion, lxxvii. 13.; Eutrop. vii. 23.

² Suet. *Domit.* 10.; Comp. Zonar. *Ann.* xi. 19.; γυνή τις ὅτι ἐναντίον εἰκόνοσ ἀντοῦ ἀπεδίσατο ἱπποκρίθη.

³ The worship of Isis and Serapis was established about this period at

nacy and vice, once so justly made against their votaries, were at least tacitly withdrawn. But the freedom and independence of Judaism, respected by a manlier age, and favoured by more magnanimous Cæsars, rebuked the lifeless superstitions of the declining empire, and offended the vanity of a Domitian. The political self-assertion of the Jews had been sufficiently crushed, at least for a season; the nation was, to all appearance, effectually subdued; but its opinions survived, and permeated the veins and arteries even of Italy herself. With the destruction of their temple and the abolition of their ritual observances, the metaphysical dogmas of the Jews would appear more mysterious than ever to a people whose religion was almost wholly absorbed in the external and the sensuous. *Judea*, says Lucan, *adores some unknown, undiscovered deity*; but fifty years later, Juvenal reproaches the followers of Moses with worshipping nought but the clouds and the sky-god, while they made a traffic of their superstitious dreams.¹ In the time of Nero, Seneca could say of them, that, though conquered they gave laws to their conqueror;² so firmly had they established themselves in the world's capital, so deeply had they impressed their ideas on every

Rome, according to the statement of Tertullian, *Apol.* 6.; and Gibbon (c 2.) naturally supposes that it owed this favour to the gratitude of the Flavian family. Hence Statius addresses Isis with the utmost respect as Queen of Egypt and Goddess of the East:

“Isi, Phoroneis quondam stabulata sub antris,
Nunc regina Phari, numenque Orientis anhelis, . . .
. . . Marti juvenem, Dea, trade Latino.”—*Sylv.* iii. 2. 110.

But the emperor Otho had already patronized this foreign cult, and had publicly conducted its ceremonies in the linen vestments of the Isiac priesthood. Suet. *Otho*, 12.

¹ Lucan, il. 592.: “dedita sacris Incerti Judæa dei.”

Juvenal, xiv. 97.: “Nil præter nubes, et cœli numen adorant.”

vi. 547.: “Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt.”

² Seneca, in a fragment quoted by S. Augustin, *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 11.: “usque eo sceleratissimæ gentis consuetudo convaluit, ut per omnes jam terras recepta sit: victi victoribus leges dederunt.”

class of the citizens, such a demand had they created for the stimulus they could administer to the jaded imaginations of both women and men. From the time of Cæsar downwards, the Jews had thrust themselves into every Roman society, and not least into the highest. They had been favoured by princes, courted by princes' freedmen; ministers had flattered them, matrons had caressed them. A Jewish potentate had moulded the character of the emperor Caius; a Jewish princess had enslaved the passions of the emperor Titus; a Jewish dancer had enchanted alike the empress, the senators, and the populace. Many citizens of every rank had more or less openly addicted themselves to Jewish usages and tenets, and when a Jewish sect ventured to transfer its obedience from the law of Moses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the number of its adherents in the capital of the empire would seem to have embraced Jews, Greeks, and Romans in nearly equal proportions.

Between these two branches of the same stem there reigned a deep antagonism, in which the government and the mass at least of the Roman people took no interest. When the jealousy of the government was excited against the Jews, indignant both at their turbulence and their proselytizing spirit, they might involve the Christians in the common charge, or might, perhaps, divert it from themselves upon their rivals. When, however, after the great Jewish war, that jealousy was converted into settled hostility, both the Jews and the Christians would be placed under the same ban, and if the sword was retained in its scabbard, they would be sternly forbidden to exercise their spiritual influence upon the citizens around them, or receive converts from the national religion into their ranks. Their exemption at this period from actual persecution might be secured by the demand that was made upon them for tribute. Both Jews and Christians, undistinguished by the Roman government, were required to pay the double drachma, according to Vespasian's enactment,

Hostile attitude of the government towards Judaism, including Christianity,

moderated by the payment of the Jewish tribute.

and if the Christians exclaimed against being thus confounded with a religion which they really renounced, those at least among them who were of Jewish extraction would be traced by the national token of circumcision.¹ Suetonius has recorded an instance of the harshness with which this inquisition was enforced, and it seems possible that the old man of ninety, who was required to uncover, and convicted of Judaism in spite of his own denial, was in fact a Jewish convert to Christianity.²

While, however, sectarians of Jewish birth were tolerated for the sake of their contributions to the treasury, Domitian, as a champion of religion, affected great indignation against the conversion of citizens to any form of Jewish manners or doctrine. When, at a later period, the Pagan conservatives sought to propitiate the gods who seemed to abandon them, they held up the Christians to popular odium as *atheists*; but this was a charge never brought specifically against the Jews.³ Nevertheless, both Jews and Christians might be branded as *impious* in the Roman sense, that is, as deniers of the Roman

Charge of impiety and Jewish manners against citizens of rank.

¹ There seems to be a reference to the Christians in the words of Suetonius, *Domit.* 12.: "deferebantur qui vel improfessi Judaicam viverent vitam, vel dissimulatâ origine imposita genti tributa non pependissent." As soon, however, as the Christians established their independence of Judaism, they fell under the ban of an illicit religion.

² Suet. *Domit.* l. c.: "præter cæteros Judaicus fiscus acerbissime actus est. . . . interfuisse me adolescentulum memini, quum a procuratore, frequentissimoque concilio, inspiceretur nonagenarius senex an circumsectus esset." The tribute of the *διδραχμον* continued in force in the third century (Origen, *Ep. ad Africanum*); nor do I find that there was any actual persecution of the Jews during that period. There exists a rescript of Antoninus Pius forbidding a Roman lady to bequeath money to the Jewish Society at Antioch, *Cod. Justin.* i. 9.; and Severus, after a revolt in Palestine, issued an interdiction against conversions, apparently in the East.

³ Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 81. The charge of "atheism" was brought against the Christians in the third century, as we read in Minucius Felix, in Tertullian, Origen, and Lucian. No such accusation is advanced by Tacitus or Pliny. It was the last refuge of declining Paganism, and showed a fear of Christianity which had never been excited by Judaism.

divinities, and as tempting men to withdraw from their service. This charge of *impiety* was, it seems, now advanced against many persons of rank in the city, and combined with that of neglecting the duties of a citizen; and to this was added the kindred charge of adopting Jewish manners.¹ Whether these culprits were guilty of Judaism or of Christianity it seems impossible to determine. If I lean to the latter interpretation, it is because Judaism seems to have lost at this time almost all its attraction in Roman eyes, and, as the creed of a conquered and degraded people, lay under the ban of ill-success, which, with Pagan inquirers, would be deemed fatal to its pretensions.² Among these inquirers, however, there would be some accurate knowledge of the difference between Judaism and Christianity, and while the government and the historians writing from official records would confound them carelessly together, I can believe that the new faith was at this time making real progress among the higher ranks of society, and assuming in some degree, in spite of the disabilities under which it lay, the position held in an earlier generation by the old.

Nevertheless, assuming this probability, we are still as far as ever from fathoming the real motives of the tyrant for the proscription with which, in the fifteenth year of his reign, he visited some of his highest nobles, and among them some of his own nearest kindred. The first charge might be that of impiety and Judaism; but, besides these crimes, Acilius Glabrio, lately consul, was accused of the high misdemeanor of having fought with beasts in the amphitheatre, an act which savours little of a Christian or even of a Jewish professor.³ Flavius Clemens was first cousin to Domitian,

Proscription of
noble Romans
on this charge,
A. D. 95.

Acilius Gla-
brio.

¹ Dion, lxxvii. 14.: ἐπηνέχθη δὲ ἀμφοῖν ἐγκλημα ἀθεότητος, ὑφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι εἰς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἦθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν.

² Of the contempt into which Judaism seems to have fallen at this time at Rome, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

³ Dion, l. c.: τὸν δὲ δὴ Γλαβρίωνα . . . κατηγορηθέντα τὰ τε ἄλλα οἶν καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ, καὶ ὅτι καὶ θηρίοις ἐμάχετο, κατέκτεινεν. Acilius Glabrio, the younger of two nobles of Domitian's court, was consul, A. D. 93.

being the son of Vespasian's brother, Sabinus, and was married to Domitian's niece, Domitilla. He had stood high in the emperor's favour. His two sons, who had received the auspicious names of Flavius Clemens and Domitilla, Vespaianus and Domitianus, had been placed by the emperor himself under the tuition of the favourite rhetorician, Quintilian, and were destined, as all believed, to the imperial succession.¹ Suddenly the Romans learnt, with consternation, that this illustrious scion of the reigning family was arrested and convicted of the crime of Judaizing, to which was added a vague charge of withdrawing from the civil, or, perhaps, from the religious duties of a citizen. Acilius was convicted and degraded to the arena, and, when he came off victorious in the combat, was sent into exile, and promptly despatched there. Clemens was sentenced at once to death and executed; and his consort was banished to an island. Of their children we hear no further: possibly they suffered with their parents. The proscription extended to many other personages of distinction, whose names are not recorded, who seem to have been generally banished, and who, after the death of the tyrant, were recalled among other surviving victims by his successor.² This proscription took place about eight months before Domitian's death, at a period when he was tormented by the utmost jealousy of all around, and when his heart was hardened to acts of unparalleled barbarity;³ and it seems more likely that it was counselled

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 15. Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* proœm. iv.: Suetonius applies to Clemens the stigma, "contemptissimæ inertiae," though he had just been consul. The phrase seems to refer to neglect of Roman usages and social prescriptions, which it was more and more difficult to enforce upon the higher ranks of citizens. It is apparently the same as the "publica circa bonas artes socordia" of Tacitus, *Annal.* xi. 15., and is not to be restricted to the evasion of political duties.

² Tertullian states that the exiled Christians were recalled by Domitian himself, *Apolog.* 5.; but this is contradicted by Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 20., and seems in itself improbable. Comp. Oros. vii. 11.

³ The exact date is thus ascertained: Clemens was consul, A. D. 95, and gave his name to the year; but Domitian put him to death, according to Sue-

by abject fear for his own person or power, than by concern for the religious interests of the state, however sincere he may once have been in his zeal for the honour of the gods. We must be content to draw the veil again over this slight and dubious glimpse of the precarious state of the Christians under Domitian, which has been too hastily dignified with the name of a persecution.¹

Alleged persecution of the Christians.

If Domitian was a precisian in religious affairs, not less did he carry the spirit of discipline into the administration of the laws. This branch of government, after exciting the feverish activity of Claudius, had been entirely neglected by Nero, and Vespasian was to the last too much of a blunt soldier to undertake a duty requiring tact and subtilty. Domitian had the training of a civilian, and his temper was inclined to chicane. His edicts and rescripts were issued in restless haste, and seem to have obtained little respect from posterity. But his

Domitian encourages the delators.

tonius: "tantum non in ipso ejus consulatu;" therefore, immediately after the termination of the year, or at the commencement of 96. Domitian himself perished in the middle of September of that year.

¹ The ecclesiastical tradition of St. John's miraculous preservation from the boiling oil (*Tertull. de Præscript. Hæret.* 36.) has no historical value, though we may give full credit to the statement of Irenæus, that the last of the Apostles was living almost at the close of the first Christian century. The Flavian persecution is claimed by Tertullian, Lactantius, Orosius, and Eusebius; but on no other grounds than those stated in the text. Eusebius gives, indeed, an interesting story from Hegesippus, which may have some foundation in fact, in reference to the inquiries instituted by Vespasian, and continued, no doubt by his successors, into all Jewish claims to the royal succession of David. The sons of Judas, "the brother of our Lord," were called before Domitian. He demanded whether they descended from David. They confessed it. Again he inquired what were their means. They declared that they possessed but 9000 denarii, and a few acres of land. They showed him their hands, hard with daily toil, in token of the simple industry by which they gained their living. Once more the emperor asked, what was the meaning of Christ's kingdom; to which they replied that it was not of this world, but should appear at the consummation of all things. Domitian, it is said, was satisfied with these answers, and, it is added, put a stop from that moment to the persecutions of the Christians. *Hist. Eccl.* l. c.

personal diligence almost equalled that of Claudius, and was, no doubt, beneficial to his people. Nor must we let ourselves speak with disrespect of the vigilance, however often ill-directed, with which he superintended the procedure of the magistrates in Rome, and throughout the provinces.¹ Never were so many bad judges and corrupt governors brought to justice; but the vigilance of the prince in his solitary watch-tower would have availed little, had he not employed the eyes of a legion of informers. At the commencement of his principate, Domitian had trodden carefully in the steps of his predecessor in repudiating and proscribing such vile services. He had expressed his abhorrence of them in a sentence which was carefully recorded by the historians: *The prince who does not repress delation, encourages it.*² But the necessities of his own policy undermined this indignant virtue. The same ruler who punished the delators of Nero fostered a similar brood without scruple in his own interest. The distinction between the delator and the legitimate accuser was accurately drawn, and it will be well to bear it in mind to understand clearly the crime so often urged against the emperors.³ In civil cases, particularly in those relating to the collection of the public dues, the government employed its own servants for the discovery and prosecution of defaulters. It was the business of the *advocatus fisci* thus to watch over the interests of the imperial revenues. But the officious zeal of irregular spies, though often really encouraged, was always professedly denounced, and such information given by slaves against their masters was repudiated with especial horror. In criminal cases the right of accusation was legally restricted to certain near relations, and the interference of a mere stranger was unauthorized delation. The legitimate pursuer, however, might employ an advocate, who stepped into his place and became his representative. The provinces might thus employ a patron at

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 8. ; Victor, *Epit.* 11.

² Suet. *Domit.* 9. ; Comp. Dion, lxxvii. 1.

³ *Cod. Justin.* ix. 1., x. 11.

Rome to accuse, in their name, their delinquent prefect; or the senate might itself appoint an advocate or accuser, as was often done in cases of public crime, particularly in cases of majesty. But the senator who, unemployed and unappointed, came forward of his own accord to accuse, was branded as a delator, and was deemed to transgress law and usage, as well as to violate the confidence which ought to reign among the members of a privileged order.¹ The difficulty in which the emperors were placed will be easily seen. Constrained as they were to veil the extent and foundation of their power, and to court, instead of demanding the obedience and homage of their subjects, cases constantly occurred in which it was essential to their safety that their supremacy should be vindicated, while it was impossible for them to come forward openly and demand protection and satisfaction. Firmly to reject the proffered assistance of the voluntary delator required an amount of self-restraint and self-confidence which few men in such a position could boast; least of all one who was conscious of his own demerits, and of the unpopularity with which he had surrounded himself. With conspirators in the senate, in the forum, in the camp, even in his own household, with a whole people constantly on the watch for the evil auguries of the soothsayers, the most trifling marks of disrespect might cause deep uneasiness, and the means of indirect repression, through the agency of the delator, must be accepted as a necessary weapon of defence.

But the necessity for the use of this fatal weapon grew with its exercise. Domitian seems, of all the emperors, to have carried it furthest, and adopted it most systematically. It was an aggravation rather than an extenuation of his crime that he seduced into his service

Character of
the delators.

¹ Hence the use of the phrase: "sponte accusasse" to mark the enormity of the delator. Of Silius Italicus, Pliny says, *Epist.* iii. 7.: "leserat famam suam sub Nerone; credebatur sponte accusasse." On the other hand, he is careful to let his correspondents know that in his own public accusations he was appointed by the senate. *Ep.* vii. 33.

men of high rank and character, and turned the senate into a mob of rivals for the disgrace of thus basely serving him. The instruments of his jealous precaution rose in a graduated hierarchy. The knights and senators trembled before a Massa Bæbius, a Carus, and a Latinus; but these delators trembled in their turn before the prince of delators, Memmius Regulus, and courted him, not always successfully, by the surrender of their estates or their mistresses. A school of high prerogative lawyers speedily arose to humour the emperor's legal tastes, and to invent a justification for every sentence it might please him to pronounce. Men who thus prostituted their abilities were found liable, as might be expected, to charges of gross irregularity in their own conduct. Thus Palfurius Sura was accused of having descended, being a consular, into the arena, to gratify Nero by wrestling with a female athlete. When, however, Vespasian struck his name from the roll of the senate, he went over to the Stoics, set up for an austere precisian, and a professed opponent of the imperial government.¹ Received back into favour by Domitian, he employed himself as readily in building up the theory of imperial prerogative. The men, indeed, who did this kind of work were sycophants; nevertheless, the work itself was seasonable. It was time that the reality of monarchy should be stripped of its disguises, and no pretence left for the fitful assertion of an impracticable idea of liberty. The long enjoyment of good and temperate government which followed, was probably in a great degree owing to the naked interpretation of imperial power put forth by the crown lawyers of Domitian. But some years of mutual suspicion and misunderstanding were still to be endured by prince and people before this consummation could be reached. The best and noblest of the citizens were still marked out as the prey of delators, whose patron connived at enormities

¹ The story is told by the scholiast on Juvenal, iv. 53. :

“*Si quid Palfurio, si credimus Armillato,
Quicquid conspicuum pulcrumque est aequore toto,
Res fasci est, ubicunque natat.*”

which bound their agents more closely to himself, and made his protection more necessary to them. The haughty nobles quailed in silence under a system in which every act, every word, every sigh was noted against them, and disgrace, exile, and death followed upon secret whispers. The fears of Domitian increased with his severities. He listened to the tales not of senators and consulars only, but of the humblest officials, and even of private soldiers. Often, says Epictetus, was the citizen, sitting in the theatre, entrapped by a disguised legionary beside him, who pretended to murmur against the emperor, till he had led his unsuspecting neighbour to confide to him his own complaints, and then skulked away to denounce him.¹

The government of Domitian leant more and more on the soldiers. Every step he took in tyranny required to be secured by fresh measures of force and cruelty.

But the guardians of the imperial tyranny might at any moment become its avengers. It was ne-

Favour shown
by Domitian to
the soldiers.

cessary to divide the officers as well as to unite the soldiers. Hence the jealousy with which the imperator kept his best lieutenants unemployed, or entrusted them only with inferior commands. Hence, perhaps, his practice of dividing the prefecture of the city, the most confidential post in the empire, among as many as twelve colleagues.² The legionaries, however, found themselves humoured, indulged, and pampered. Of reducing their number for the sake of economy there was no further mention. They stalked along the streets as a separate and favoured class, driving the herd of citizens to the right and left with the clang of their boot-heels, and the rattling of their gaudy accoutrements. It concerned the dignity perhaps, and certainly the safety of the emperor, that the bravest of his subjects should seem also the most honoured, and the most fortunate; so that elevated by privileges, as well as ornamental distinctions, above the unarmed deni-

¹ Epictetus, *Dissert.* iv. 13.

² This fact is stated by Lydus, *de Magistratibus*, i. 49., ii. 19. Imhof's *Domitianus*, p. 100.

zens of the city, they might share at least with their chief the envy and hatred of the people.¹ To gain the confidence of this class the emperor tore himself repeatedly from the pleasures of the capital, and pretended to share their toils in distant campaigns. In Domitian we seem first to return to that early condition of society to which despotism in civilized states is ever tending, when the chief is compelled to resume the command of his armies in person, and make himself the actual leader of a horde of organized banditi. The position to which this emperor was first called was accepted with increasing unreserve by his successors. In Rome they solemnized their triumphs; in their Campanian villas they enjoyed brief snatches of repose; but it was on the frontiers more and more that they reaped the laurels which attached the soldiers to their persons, and from the camp that they issued more and more the decrees by which they ruled the world.

Meanwhile the mob of the city demanded its accustomed indulgences more keenly than ever. Domitian lavished on it the old amusements in increased profusion, and invented new. From year to year he squandered his treasures on shows and entertainments. His costly exhibitions displayed with exaggerated features the tasteless extravagance in which the Romans delighted. Gladiators hewed and hacked one another; wild beasts tore their victims; chariots raced and jostled as of old; but the Flavian amphitheatre afforded a wider arena than any former edifice, and the shows appropriated to it were enhanced in grandeur and extent. The citizens shouted with admiration at a sea-fight enacted within the stone enclosure, the vast space beneath them being flooded for the occasion from the tanks or fish-ponds of Nero's gardens.² Here, too, women fought with women, or even with men; an army of dwarfs was

Domitian ca-
resses the popu-
lace.

¹ Juvenal, xvi. in fin.: "ducis hoc referre videtur."

² Suet. *Domit.* 4.; Comp. *Tit.* 7. Domitian constructed also a naumachia by the side of the Tiber: *ἐν καὶνῷ τινὶ χωρίῳ*, says Dion, lxxvii. 8., to distinguish it from that of Augustus.

marshalled in a combat against cranes.¹ Domitian added two colours, the purple and the golden, to the four factions of the circus, and increased the number of the chariots that dashed in tumultuous fury round the goal. He courted popularity by the constancy with which he attended these exhibitions, which every citizen of taste and refinement had long pronounced intolerably vulgar; but he preserved his own dignity with more self-respect than some of his predecessors, and though noted for exquisite skill in some manual exercises, he never deigned to exhibit it in public, or purchase applause by personal degradation.² Sometimes, indeed, his caprice or imperiousness broke through the restraints of his self-imposed affability. On the occasion of a sudden storm of rain he refused to allow the veil of the amphitheatre to be drawn over the spectators; and once, when the mob of the circus disturbed him by their clamour, he did not scruple to command the herald to call them to silence, a bold breach of etiquette towards the majesty of the people.³

While, indeed, the brutal or senseless amusements of fighting and racing still enchained the passions of the populace, a more elevated taste was apparently making way among a large middle class of citizens. The mag-

Establishment
of the Capitoline
contests in
singing and
composition.

istrates of the city put some check on the extravagance of their luxury, and their clients and dependents began to yearn for intellectual recreations, little known to the earlier generations. The moral triumph of Greece over her conquerors was complete on the day when the Roman

¹ Stat. *Sylv.* i. 6-53.:

"Stat sexus rudis insciusque ferri,
Et pugnas capit improbus viriles . . .
Casuræque vagis grues rapinis
Mirantur pumilos ferociore."

Women fighting in the arena had been seen under Nero. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 32.

² Suetonius (*Domit.* 19.) mentions some extraordinary instances of his skill with the bow, which he would sometimes exhibit to select guests in his Alban villa.

³ Dion, lxxvii. 8. ; lxxix. 6. : τοῦτο δὲ τὸ τοῦ Δομετιανοῦ αὐτὸ πῆσαι.

emperor deigned to institute quinquennial contests in poetry, eloquence, and music, after the fashion of the graceful games of Hellas, long since naturalized in the Grecian cities of Campania.¹ But Domitian was an antiquarian, and he required a precedent. He discovered that on the first rebuilding of the Capitol by Camillus, the senate had directed their preserver to institute dramatic shows, in which the taking of Veii held a prominent place.² Fortified by this authority, Domitian celebrated his own restoration of the national temple with games on the Grecian model, such as Nero had exhibited with some reserve in his private circus, in the most public manner, and on a scale of unusual magnificence. On the summit of the Capitoline hill, in the face of men and gods, the compositions of the rival candidates, both in Greek and Latin, were cited, and the victors crowned with oak-leaves in gilded metal.³ The subjects of these pieces were various, but we may believe that they turned for the most part on the praise of the emperor himself, and served, more or less directly, for his glorification, as a warrior, a poet, a ruler, or a demigod.⁴ The connexion between the founder of the prize and the god in whose honour it was founded was touched, no doubt, more or less delicately by every competitor.⁵ The favourite poets and orators of the day contended eagerly for these distinctions, and lamented, when they failed of success, the harshness or ingratitude of

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 4. Sturdy Romans still continued to protest against these Hellenic corruptions, and even, when they could, to put them down. When Rufinus abolished the Gymnic Games at Vienna, Junius Mauricus exclaimed in the senate, "Vellem etiam Romæ tolli possent!" Plin. *Ep.* iv. 22.

² Liv. v. 50. (A. U. C. 389); Festus, p. 322.

³ Censorin. *de Die Nat.* 18. (A. U. C. 839, A. D. 86, Eckhel, vi. 381.); Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 5.: "sanctoque indutum Cæsaris auro." Martial, iv. 1. 6.: "Perque manus tantas, plurima quercus eat."

⁴ Plin. *Paneg.* 54.: "Et quis jam locus miserræ adulationis manebat ignarus, cum laudes imperatorum ludis etiam et comissionibus celebrarentur, saltarentur, atque in omne ludibrium effeminatis vocibus, modis, gestibus frangerentur?"

⁵ Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* iii. 7. 4.

the patron deity.¹ The transformation of Italian Rome into a Grecian city by the architects of Nero was crowned by this truly Grecian solemnity, which seems to have taken root in the habits and tastes of the people, and exercised, no doubt, great influence upon them. The periodical contests of the *Agon Capitolinus* (for even the name they bore was Greek) continued without interruption down to the fifth century; the solemn consecration to the muses of a spot known for so many ages only as the stronghold of national force, sank deep into the minds of successive generations. The temple and the citadel have vanished in storm and fire, and even their sites have become the battlefield of antiquaries; but it was on the Capitoline hill that the song of Petrarch was crowned in history, and the song of Corinna in romance.

At the Capitoline games Domitian presided in person, in the Grecian costume, which it had hitherto been deemed disgraceful for a Roman to assume in Rome, wearing also on his head a new-fangled coronet of gold adorned with figures of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva: the flamens of Jupiter, who sate by his side, bore on their own fillets the image of the emperor. The first of the Cæsars had chosen his ancestress Venus for his patron divinity; Augustus had placed himself under the protection of Apollo; Domitian affected to believe that he was the special favourite of Minerva.² He founded

Assumes Minerva as his patroness, and institutes games in her honour at his Alban villa.

¹ Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 5. 37.:

"Tu cum Capitolia nostra
Inficiata lyrae, sævum ingratumque dolebas
Mecum victa Jovem."

v. 3. 232.:

"Et fugit speratus honos, cum lustra parentis
Invida Tarpeii canerem."

Posterity has avenged the defeated competitor by preserving so large a portion of his verses, while it has let even the names of his rivals perish. Imhof supposes, not unreasonably, that he was distanced, not in poetry, but in adulation.

² Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* x. 1. 91.: familiare numen Minervæ." *Suet. Domit.* 15. Statius and Martial, *passim*. In token of his devotion to this goddess Domitian is said to have demanded to be chosen Archon of Athens. Philostr.

annual contests in her honour at his Alban villa, and in these, too, he combined poetry and rhetoric with musical and gymnastic exhibitions. Statius, who failed of the prize on the Capitol, was thrice crowned at Alba; but he seems to have held the olive chaplet of the goddess which he gained in less estimation than the oaken wreath of Jupiter which was denied him.¹ Domitian's vanity was better employed when it led him to bestow his regards, however cold and stately, on men

His patronage of men of letters. Quintilian, Statius, Martial, Tacitus, and Pliny the younger.

of letters; when he conferred on the learned and virtuous Quintilian the ornaments of the consulship, and made him tutor to his youthful kinsmen; when he encouraged, with his applause, and at least with some trifling recognition of more substantial value, the genius of Statius and Martial. Men of still higher character or position, such as Tacitus and Pliny, owed to his discerning patronage their early advancement in public life; though they and others might pretend at a later period to have shrunk from a protection which demanded unworthy adulation. True it is, perhaps, that no business, however trifling, was transacted in the senate without the preface of a fulsome eulogy on the prince.² The emperor's tame lion, or mutilated valet, was celebrated with no less fervid eloquence than a victory over the foes of the republic.³ The repair of twenty miles of pavement on the well-worn route to Puteoli was made the subject of an extended panegyric, while the Flavian amphitheatre, the immortal work of Vespasian and Titus, to which Domitian had only set the coping stones, extorted from the courtliest of his poets the tribute of but one or two short epigrams.⁴

Vit. Apoll. viii. 16. He assumed her effigy on his medals from the year 833, *Eckhel*, vi. 375. Philostratus affirms that he pretended to be her son.

¹ *Suet. Domit.* 4.; *Stat. Sylv.* iii. 2. 28.: "ter me nitidis Albana ferentem Serta comis."

² *Plin. Paneg.* 34.: "nihil tam vulgare tam parvum in Senatu agebatur, ut non laudibus principum immorarentur quibuscunque censendi necessitas incidisset."

³ *Stat. Sylv.* li. 5.: "Leo mansuetus Imperatoris;" iii. 4.: "Coma Earini."

⁴ *Stat. Sylv.* iv. 3.: "Via Domitiana." *Martial, De Spectac.* 1. 2.

Domitian's dubious successes in the field furnished a theme for many sounding hyperboles.¹ But the men of letters reserved, as might be expected, their most laboured encomiums for the verses or speeches to which their princely patron himself gave utterance. *To him, say Silius, the muses shall themselves bring offerings, and Phœbus shall marvel at a song more potent than that which stayed the Hebrus, and uprooted Rhodope.*²

Repaid by the
flattery of the
poets.

Such were the inordinate compliments which could please the ears of a son of the homely Vespasian, when, conscious of the hatred of his senators, he could no longer soothe his apprehensions by the vows of loyalty extorted from them. The poor poets could cause him no anxiety. He need not

¹ Martial, ii. 2., v. 19., vii. 1-8. Sil. Ital. iii. 608. Stat. *Sylv.* ll, cc. *Theb.* i. 19. :

"Bisque jugo Rhenum, bis adactum legibus Istrum
Et conjurato dejectos vertice Dacos."

² Sil. Ital. iii. 618. :

"Quin et Romuleos superabit voce nepotes
Quis erit eloquio partum decus : huic sua Musæ
Sacra ferent ; meliorque lyra cui substitit Hebrus
Et venit Rhodope, Phæbo miranda loquetur."

Comp. Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* x. i. 91. : "Hos nominavimus quia Germanicum Augustum ab institutis studiis deflexit cura terrarum, parumque Dis visum est esse eum maximum poetarum," &c. Valerius Flaccus specifies a poem by Domitian on the war in Judea (*Argon.* i. 12.) : "Versam proles tua pandat Idumen, Namque potest," and some modern critics ascribe to him, I think erroneously, the translation of Aratus, which goes under the name of Germanicus Caesar. Quintilian, in the preface to *Inst. Orat.* iv., flatters him for his accomplishments as an orator, and even Suetonius admits them to some extent. It is difficult to say how far Domitian deserves to be regarded as a patron of literature. The seventh satire of Juvenal beginning, "Et spes et ratio studiorum in Cæsare tantum," is probably of a later date. Suetonius speaks in the most disparaging terms of his personal acquirements, which are so highly lauded by the authorities above cited. He allows, however, that he bestowed pains and expense in restoring the treasures of the great libraries destroyed at Rome by fire : "exemplaribus undique petitis missisque Alexandriam qui describerent emendarentque." *Domit.* 20. His favours to Statius and Martial seem to have been but slender. Tacitus only allows that he pretended to love letters and poetry. *Hist.* iv. in fin.

read their blessings backwards, and interpret their notes of admiration into disguised tokens of disgust. To them he could allow unlimited licence to brand the memory of Nero, to sound the praises of Lucan, who had plotted against a tyrant, and of Thræsea, whom a tyrant had sacrificed, neglecting in their favour the common interest of tyrants to protect the memory of one another.¹ Even in the last moments of his own tyranny he clung tenaciously to flatteries such as had hardly been lavished on the opening promise of his predecessor. On the kalends of January 95, the fifteenth year of his reign, when he entered on his seventeenth consulship, a period when all the worst features of his character had been brought into full relief by the terrors of the Antonian conspiracy, he could allow the humble courtier Statius to paint in glowing colours the greetings of the god Janus, the patron of Roman chronology. *Hail, great father of the world, about to inaugurate with me the ages! Behold the fresh splendour of our temples! Behold the aspiring flames of our festal fires! on thee the constellations of my winter rain a genial warmth! . . . Augustus bore the fasces thirteen times; but it was in his latter years that he first began to deserve them. Thou, still in thy youth, hast already transcended thy ancestors. A thousand trophies shalt thou gain; only permit them to be triumphs! Yet remaineth Bactria to be conquered: yet remaineth Babylon. No Indian laurel has yet been laid in the lap of Jupiter: the Arabs, the Seres kneel not yet in supplication. All the year hath not yet its full honours.*

¹ Statius, *Sylv.* li. 7. 100.:

“Sic et tu rabidi nefas tyranni
Jussus præcipitem subire lethem.”

Martial, vii. 21.: “Heu! Nero crudelis nullaque invisior umbra.”

i. 9.: “magni Thræseæ consummatique Catonis.”

The praises of Cato had been tolerated by Augustus, but Pompeius and the whole “Pharsalian crowd” receive their apotheosis from Statius:

“Qua Pharsalia turba congregatur;
Et te nobile carmen insonantem
Pompeii comitantur et Catones.”

*Ten months still wait impatient to be designated by thy titles.*¹

Nero had his social hours, and the temper to enjoy them. His smile was attractive; he could flatter and charm; he had companions and favourites, possibly friends and lovers. But the genius of Domitian was always solitary and morose; he seems to have had no personal intimacies; his humour, when he chose to unbend, was caustic and saturnine. Shrewd enough to take an accurate measure of the sycophants around him, he enjoyed a grim satisfaction in playing on their fears. If you only talked with him on the state of the weather, your life was at stake, says the satirist, and you felt that it was at stake.² In the depth of his dissimulation he was an imitator of Tiberius whom he professed to make his model both in his measures and his demeanour; but the amusement he derived from dissembling with his victims was all his own. Of the feats he performed in disguising his cruel intentions from the wretches he was about to sacrifice, some ghastly stories were circulated, which suffice at least to show the estimate commonly formed of him.³

Domitian's
meekness and
dissimulation.

The incident about to be related is not to be regarded as a myth invented in later times to realize the popular idea of Domitian's moody humour. Though narrated by a professed satirist, we are expressly told to consider it as a veritable history, and we are bound, I think, to accept it as at least true in the main. If indeed we admit the accuracy of every particular, it presents internal evidence of having occurred not later than the early winter of the year 84, the fourth of the tyrant's reign; and as it

The council of
"the turbot"
described by
Juvenal.

¹ Statius, *Sylv.* iv. 1. These warlike aspirations are very like those at the beginning of Lucan's poem; but there they are addressed to Rome and the citizens, here to the emperor alone.

² Juvenal, iv. 87.:

"Cum quo de pluviis aut æstibus aut nimbo
Vere locuturi fatum pendebat amicti."

³ Suet. *Domit.* 11.; Plin. *Paneg.* 66.: "quod tam infidum mare quam blanditiæ principum illorum?" etc.

shows the insolence of Domitian rather than his barbarity, the meek subservience of his attendants rather than their abject terror, it may appear to represent one of the earlier scenes of his career.¹ About the end, then, of the year 84, the members of the imperial council, the select associates and advisers,—not the favourites, we are reminded, of the prince, but rather the especial objects of his hate, and pale as all might see, from the anxiety ever present to those who were most in contact with him,—were suddenly required to repair in haste to their master.² They were, it seems, eleven in number, and in twice or thrice as many verses their crimes or virtues are succinctly traced for us with a pen of cynical sincerity. One after another pass before us, Pegasus the prefect—say rather, the bailiff—of the city; for what is Rome but the emperor's farm, and the prefect of Rome, but his manciple?³ Fuscus, brave and voluptuous, soon to leave his limbs a prey to the Dacian vultures;⁴ Crispus, a mild and genial grey-beard, who has long owed his life to the meekness with which he has yielded to the current, and shrunk from the vain assertion of independence;⁵ the Glabrios, father

¹ Juvenal, iv. 35.: "Res vera agitur." Assuming, as I say, the accuracy of details, the date may be fixed by the introduction of Fuscus into the scene, who was killed in Dacia in the campaign of 85, or at least quitted Rome for the frontiers in the spring of that year. But the incident took place, "jam cedente pruinis Auctumno," i. e., at the beginning of winter; not later, therefore, than November 84. It might be argued, perhaps, from the allusion to Britain as not yet pacified, that it was before the conclusion of Agricola's warfare, and accordingly a year, or even two years, earlier.

² Juvenal, iv. 72.: "quos oderat ille." Comp. Tacitus (*Hist.* iv. 8.) of a confidant of Nero, who confesses: "non minus sibi anxiam talem amicitiam quam aliis exilium."

³ From the scholiast on Juv. iv. 76., and from some notices in the *Corpus Jur. Civil.*, we learn that Pegasus, the freedman of Domitian or Vespasian, obtained the consulship, and gave his name to certain edicts of the senate. He seems, even by the satirist's admission, to have been a respectable man.

⁴ Juv. iv. 112.:

"Et qui vulturibus servabat viscera Dacis
Fuscus, marmorea meditatus praelia villa."

⁵ Juv. iv. 81. Quintilian has some favourable allusions to this man's wit and temper.

and son, of whom the elder slunk through an inglorious existence in pusillanimous security, the younger was doomed to perish innocently condemned to fight with beasts in the arena;¹ the blind Catullus, deadliest of delators, with whom Domitian, as with a blind and aimless weapon, aimed at his destined victims;² to these were added the sly Veiento, the fat old sycophant, Montanus, Crispinus redolent with the perfumes of his native East, the vile spy Pompeius who slit men's throats with a whisper, and Rubrius the perpetrator of some crime too bad, it seems, to be specified even in that day of evil deeds and shameless scandals.

Such were the men who now hurried in the darkness along the Appian way, and met at midnight in the vestibule of the imperial villa, or the tyrant's fortress, which crowned the long slope of the ascent to Alba.³ Anxiously they asked each other, *What news? What the purport of their unexpected summons? What foes of Rome had broken the prince's slumbers—the Ghatti or the Sicambri, the Britons or the Dacians?* While they were yet waiting for admission, the menials of the palace entered, bearing aloft a huge turbot, a present to the emperor, which they had the mortification of seeing introduced into his presence, while the doors were still shut against themselves. A humble fisherman of the Upper coast had found the monster stranded on the beach,

¹ Juvenal, iv. 94. foll. The younger Acilius Glabrio has been mentioned before. Juvenal insinuates that his descent into the arena was a feint to make himself despicable, and so protect himself from the emperor's jealousy, and is compared to the simulated folly of Brutus.

² Of Messalinus Catullus see Plin. *Ep.* iv. 22.: "qui luminibus orbatus ingenio sæbo mala cæcitatibus addiderat; non venerabatur, non erubescerebat, non moderabatur; qui sæpius Domitiano, non secus ac tela, quæ et ipsa cæca et improvida ferantur, in optimum quemque contorquebatur."

³ Juvenal, iv. 145.: "quos Albanam dux magnus in arcem Traxerat." The site of this villa, which belonged originally to Pompeius, and became a favourite residence of the emperors, may still be traced on the slope of the hill covered by the modern Albano, about fourteen miles from Rome. A detachment of prætorians was quartered in the vicinity, whence the term *arx* applied to the palace itself.

beneath the fane of Venus at Ancona, and had hurried with his prize across the Apennines, to receive a reward for so rare an offering to the imperial table. When at last the councillors were admitted, the question reserved for their deliberations was no other than this, whether the big fish should be cut in pieces, or served up whole on some enormous platter, constructed in its honour. The cabinet was no doubt sensibly persuaded that the question allowed at least of no delay, and with due expressions of surprise and admiration voted the dish, and set the potter's wheel in motion. Such is the outline of a story which Juvenal has embellished with his happiest sallies, abounding with illustrations of character and manners. Could we believe in its literal truth, we might regard it perhaps as the most curious domestic anecdote of antiquity; but if it be no more than a sport of wit, and a bold satirical invention, it still has its value as a lively representation of the genius of the times.¹

There was a time when Domitian might be satisfied with indulging his cynical contempt for his creatures by merely vexing and humiliating them. As he advanced in his career of tyranny he required the more pungent gratification of overwhelming them with terror. Such an anecdote is preserved by Dion, and the narrative of the historian forms a fitting pendant to that of the satirist. *Having once made a great feast for the citizens, he proposed, we read, to follow it up with an entertainment to a select number of the highest nobility. He fitted up an apartment all in black. The ceiling was black, the walls were black, the pavement was black, and upon it were ranged rows of bare stone seats, black also. The guests were introduced at night without their attendants, and each might see at the head of his couch a column placed, like a tombstone, on which his own name was graven, with the cresset lamp*

The funeral
banquet de-
scribed by
Dion.

¹ The reader will remember the "Minerva's shield" of Vitellius, and suspect perhaps that this story, notwithstanding the mock gravity of the author's disclaimer, is fancifully combined from the tradition of the one emperor's gluttony, and the grim humour of the other

above it, such as is suspended in the tombs. Presently there entered a troop of naked boys, blackened, who danced around with horrid movements, and then stood still before them, offering them the fragments of food which are commonly presented to the dead. The guests were paralyzed with terror, expecting at every moment to be put to death; and the more, as the others maintained a deep silence, as though they were dead themselves, and Domitian spake of things pertaining to the state of the departed only. But this funereal feast was not destined to end tragically. Cæsar happened to be in a sportive mood, and when he had sufficiently enjoyed his jest, and had sent his visitors home expecting worse to follow, he bade each be presented with the silver cup and platter on which his dismal supper had been served, and with the slave, now neatly washed and apparelled, who had waited upon him. Such, said the populace, was the way in which it pleased the emperor to solemnize the funereal banquet of the victims of his defeats in Dacia, and of his persecutions in the city.¹

Such graceless buffoonery in a public man offended Roman dignity to a degree we can scarcely estimate. It was no empty truism, no vapid moralizing on the part of the poet, when he broke off abruptly in the midst of his comic relation, to exclaim with passionate indignation: *Better all these follies,—better that he had spent in this despicable child's play all the hours he gave to the slaughter of Rome's noblest offspring, unpunished and unrequited.* And so he seems to clench his fist and grind his teeth at the bald-pate Nero, and hails his destined fall, when at last he shall have made himself a terror, not to his nobles only, but to the slaves of his own household. But at this period the best blood of Rome had trickled under his hand in a few intermittent drops only, *like the first of a thunder shower.* It was not till after the Antonian conspiracy that the stream began to flow in a copious and unceasing torrent,

Indignation of the Romans at the emperor's mockery.

¹ Dion, lxxvii. 9. From this allusion, and from the mention of the feast given to the citizens, we may fix this incident to the period of Domitian's Dacian triumph, A. D. 91.

and the signal for the outburst was, perhaps, the death of the bravest of the Romans, the man of whom Domitian stood most in awe, whose removal might seem the most necessary for the secure exercise of his cruelty.¹

Since his recall from Britain, the conqueror of Galgacus had been content with the modest dignity of a private station, in which he enjoyed the respect of all good men, and might feel that of all the chiefs of the armies there was none to whom, had the prince's jealousy allowed it, the contest with the Dacians and Sarmatians might so confidently be entrusted. But Domitian had plainly intimated that he dared not again employ him, and Agricola had discreetly refrained from soliciting employment. If he was named for an important government, it was with the understanding that he should himself decline it; but the emperor took what was deemed a base advantage of his moderation, in withholding the salary of the office, which, it seems, ought in fairness to have been pressed upon him. Domitian knew that he had now openly mortified a gallant and popular officer, and he began to hate the man he had injured. Such, as Tacitus reminds us, is a common infirmity of our nature; but Domitian's temper, he adds, was prone to take offence, and the more he dissembled the more was he implacable. Yet even his morose and sullen humour was soothed by the prudence and reserve of Agricola, who abstained from provoking his own fate by a vain pretence of free-mouthed patriotism. Thus he continued to live in the eyes of prince and people down to the year 93, the ninth from his return to Rome; but on his death, which occurred at that critical period, the rumour spread that he had been cut off by poison. *For myself, adds his biographer, I know nothing, and can affirm nothing. This, however, I can say, that throughout his last illness the emperor's own freedmen, the emperor's own physicians, were constant in their visits and inquiries, more constant than courtly etiquette might warrant,*

Death of Agricola,

A. D. 93.

A. U. 846,
and rumour of
poison.

¹ Tac. Agric. 43.

whether it were from anxiety or from curiosity only. The day he died his last moments were watched, and every symptom reported by set couriers, and none could believe that the emperor would take such pains to get the first intimation of an event he really deprecated. Nevertheless, he assumed all the outward signs of grief, though reckless by this time of popular hatred; for it was easier to Domitian to dissemble his joy over a dead enemy than his fear of a living one. Thus much, at least, was ascertained, that on reading Agricola's will, in which he found himself appointed coheir with the wife and daughter, he openly avowed his satisfaction at the honour done him, and at the esteem, as he supposed, thus manifested towards him. So blind was he, so corrupted by constant flattery, as not to know that a virtuous prince is never chosen for his heir by a virtuous parent.¹

We have been too much accustomed to the unproved insinuations of foul play advanced by Tacitus against the enemies of his order to expect from him any corroboration for charges thus brandished in the face of the tormentor of the senate. We can only regard them as a manifesto of defiance, delivered indeed long after the tyrant's fall, and addressed to an audience that welcomed every censure, and applauded every surmise against him. Yet, there is a fair presumption against a despot to whom such crimes could be popularly imputed. Domitian was surely not incapable of poisoning Agricola. The death of the old commander, it may be added, was singularly opportune to the emperor. The biographer, indeed, has told us in memorable language, that the sufferer himself was fortunate not only in the brilliancy of his life, but in the seasonableness of his decease. *Agricola*, he exclaims, in the long organ peals of his sounding peroration, *Agricola saw not the curia besieged, and the senate surrounded by armed men, and the slaughter of so many consulars, the*

Considerations
on the imputa-
tion of poison-
ing to Domi-
tian.

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 43. Agricola died August 23, A. D. 93 (A. U. 846), at the age of fifty-six. *Agric.* p. 44. Dion accepts the rumour propagated by Tacitus, and ascribes his death without hesitation to poison.

flight or exile of so many noble women, from one fatal proscription. Hitherto, he assures us, the delators, such as Carus and Catullus, exercised their hideous trade in the secret chambers of the palace. Not till after Agricola's death did they venture to denounce the good, the noble, the wise, in public, and incited senators to lay hands on senators, prætorians on consulars.¹ It was opportune for Domitian that at the opening of this sanguinary career, at the moment when his terrors had been frenzied by the outbreak of the Antonian conspiracy, and his only safety seemed to lie in the swift extermination of the highest and the noblest, the man whom of all others he might have thought most formidable, should be suddenly and unexpectedly removed. Had Agricola lived, would Domitian have dared to inaugurate his reign of terror? Had Domitian given the reign to his savage cruelty, would not the Senate have called on Agricola to deliver it?

Such considerations may still make us hesitate to absolve Domitian from the crime of assassination. On the other hand, we must observe that the language, both of Tacitus and Pliny, points to this epoch as the commencement of a new era of blood, and leaves us under the impression that hitherto the despot's tyranny had been exhibited in only occasional excesses. It was in the year 93 that Pliny filled the office of prætor; but he did not succeed to the consulship till a later period, and under a new and more auspicious reign. Hitherto, as he tells us, he had consented to be advanced in his public career by the archdissembler, whose wickedness he had not fully fathomed; but now, when Domitian threw off the mask, and openly *professed a hatred of all good men*, the virtuous aspirant at once stopped short.² But the death of Agricola was,

Proscription of
the best and
noblest of the
senators,
A. D. 93.

¹ Tac. *Agric.* 45.: "mox nostræ duxere Helvidiem in carcerem manus;" Comp. Plin. *Ep.* ix. 13.: "inter multa scelera multorum nullum atrocius videbatur quam quod in senatu senator senatori, prætorius consulari, reo iudex manus intulisset."

² Plin. *Paneg.* 95.: "cursu quondam provectus ab illo insidiosissimo prin-

as it were, the signal for the proscription of the most eminent senators, precisely those most closely connected in blood and feeling with Thræsea, the victim of Nero, and Helvidius, the victim of Vespasian. Upon them and others the fury of the delators was let loose, and charges, on grounds for the most part absurdly frivolous, were advanced in the senate. Arulenus Rusticus and Senecio were thus hunted to death for writing in praise of these noble Stoics; a son of Helvidius for appearing to reflect on Domitian's conjugal infidelities; Maternus for the crime of declaiming against tyrants; Cocceianus suffered for having kept the birthday of his kinsman, the emperor Otho; Pomponianus on the still more trifling pretext that he set up in his house a map of the world, and compiled a volume of royal speeches from the history of Livy; Lucullus, formerly prefect in Britain, perished for giving to a newly-invented javelin the name of Lucullean. And lastly, to close the gloomy list, which might be still further extended even from our imperfect records, Flavius Sabinus, the emperor's cousin, suffered ostensibly on no graver charge than the mistake of a herald in styling him imperator instead of consul. Meanwhile Juventius Celsus, who had actually conspired against Domitian, was allowed to live, on his undertaking to make important disclosures, which he postponed on various pretexts till the emperor's death relieved him from his pledge.¹

The death of Agricola was also followed by the second and more stringent edict against the philosophers, a persecution which we cannot fail to connect with the judicial murder of the Stoics in the senate, the connexions of Thræsea and Helvidius. Domitian

Second edict
against the
philosophers,
A. D. 94.

cipe, antequam profiteretur odium bonorum; postquam professus est substiti." But, in *Ep.* iii. 11., he says that he was prætor in the year in which the philosophers were banished (the second time, A. D. 93 extr.), and Helvidius and others put to death. Up to this year then Pliny at least would have us believe that Domitian's conduct had not been flagrantly tyrannical.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 10.; Dion, lxxvii. 13. Sabinus, it will be remembered, was the husband of Julia, and Domitian had long regarded him with jealousy, as affecting imperial airs: "indigne ferens albatos et ipsum ministros habere, proclamavit, οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιατῆν." Suet. c. 12.

had grounds, no doubt, to apprehend an understanding between the indignant statesmen of the curia and the professors of wisdom and virtue in the schools. Both held the same language and used the same watchwords; both appealed to the same principles and the same living examples; whether the Stoic declaimed his high political doctrines from the benches of the assembly, or whether he fled from public business and murmured his discontent in the shades of domestic privacy, he was equally an object of suspicion to the tyrant, who feared open hostility in the one case, and covert intrigue in the other. While, however, the politicians were put cruelly to death, the rhetoricians seem to have been treated with some mildness. If we may believe indeed their own complaints, they were driven to the wildest recesses of the empire, to the shores of Gaul, the sands of Libya, and the steppes of Scythia. But Artemidorus, son-in-law of Musonius, was removed, as Pliny himself informs us, no further than to a suburban villa, while many teachers of philosophy, on throwing off their gowns, were suffered to abide unmolested in the city. Demetrius was able to conceal himself within the limits of Italy; nor is it clear that Dion Chrysostomus was actually relegated to the Ister, to which he wandered in his restless migrations.¹ Epictetus set up his professorial chair at Nicopolis in Epirus. Apollonius of Tyana, who had been convicted of treasonable machinations early in Domitian's reign, had been allowed to settle in the eastern provinces, and was still haranguing, agitating, and possibly conspiring in the pleasant retreat of Ephesus.

Another, and yet another year of terrors and persecutions followed, till the jealousies of Domitian were crowned by the measures already noticed against the Jews or Christians. The murder of Flavius Clemens was the last, and perhaps the worst, of the atrocities of this reign. But committed as he now was to a struggle for life against all that was virtuous and

Reign of terror,
and last
months of Do-
mitian,
A. D. 95.

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* vii. 4. 10.; *Vit. Sophist.* i. 7.

honest among men, Domitian seems to have felt at last that the time for intrigue or dissimulation in crime was past, and his increasing barbarity did not scruple to evince its pleasure in the actual sight of the suffering it inflicted. Even Nero, it was said, had shrunk from witnessing the torments of his victims, but Domitian came in person into the senate-house to watch the agonies of the accused and the suspected; he personally interrogated them when arrested, holding their chains in his hands for his own security, while the natural redness of his countenance might equally disguise the glow of shame, or the coolness of utter shamelessness.¹ If, indeed, his victims' pains could be compensated by those of their persecutor, they had ample revenge in the fears that haunted and maddened him. The dissimulation he had practised towards them was a tribute to the terrors they continued to inflict on him. Like his master in statecraft, he affected to cast on the senate the odium of his most hateful sentences, and sometimes even courted popularity by pretending to relax the penalties his over-zealous counsellors had recommended.² But the very adulation of the senators became to him a source of solicitude from the general disgust it inspired. Accordingly, he declined with nervous eagerness the honours they continued to press on him, and he fretfully disclaimed the invidious pomp of a guard of knights. Old traditions of self-respect might still linger even in the second order of citizens, and disgust them with an act of bodily service. The emperor led the Romans in the field, but the prince was

¹ Tac. *Agrie*. 45.: "Nero tamen subtraxit oculos, jussitque scelera non spectavit." It was only the injury to Roman nobles that, in the view of Tacitus, deserved the name of "scelera," atrocities. He does not represent Nero as withdrawing from the sight of more vulgar sufferings. Comp. the expression which follows: "sævus ille vultus et rubor quo se contra pudorem muniebat," with Suet. *Domit.* 18.: "commendari se verecundia oris sentiebat." The redness was natural, not factitious. For the other circumstances mentioned in the text see Dion, lxxvii. 12.

² Suet. *Domit.* 11. On such occasions he would say: "intelligent me omnes senatui interfuisse."

still only first among his peers in the city.¹ Yet neither among the senators nor the knights was there spirit enough to refrain from the most loathsome excesses of servility; still less did either order now raise a hand against the tyrant who reigned over them. They beheld without resistance the most honoured of their fellow-citizens sacrificed for the crime of praising the illustrious dead; they beheld their writings consumed in the forum, and the voice of the Roman people, the liberty of the Roman senate, stifled, as it were, on the funeral pyre; they showed, as Tacitus, himself not the least patient among them, says, a remarkable example of patience, and carried subservience to its utmost limits, as their ancestors had carried independence.² Instead of concerting the honourable antagonism of a Galba or a Vespasian in the camps, they left it to the freedmen of the imperial household to organize assassination in the palace. Domitian, red with the blood of the Lamiæ, reeking from the slaughter of the noblest of the citizens, fell at last by the blow of a miscreant's dagger, when he had made himself formidable to his own menials.³

In the fifteenth year of his protracted principate, Domitian had arrested the prefects of the palace and of the guard, and

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 14. When Honorius entered Rome, at the close of the fourth century, his moderation was remarked in not suffering the senators to walk before him. The emperor had gained a victory, and the senate were willing perhaps to treat his appearance among them as a triumph, in which case such deference would not have been irregular. But he recalled them to a juster sense of the circumstances, and of the real traditions of the state. Claudian somewhat enhances his merit by still treating his entry as triumphal; *vi. Cons. Honor.* 549.

“moderataque laudant
Tempora, quod clemens aditu, quod pectore, *solus*
Romanos vetuit *currum* præcedere Patres.”

² Tac. *Agric.* 2.

³ Juvenal, *iv. ult.* The allusion to the Lamiæ refers to the death of Ælius Lamia, who indeed may have perished earlier, as the complaint against him was a sarcasm he uttered on Domitian's taking his wife from him, which occurred early in the reign of Vespasian. Suet. *Domit.* 10.

could no longer rely on those most closely attached to his personal service. He could now hold power only by redoubled terror, and by the suddenness of his blows. It was to overwhelm and paralyse the intriguer in his own household that he now required the head of Epaphroditus, the freedman who had assisted Nero in his suicide.¹ This man had been banished years before for the crime of killing Cæsar, even at Cæsar's own request. Domitian would cut off all hope of life even in exile from the wretch who should lay hands on the sacred person. But the sacrifice was unavailing. He could now free himself neither from men nor from the gods; neither from the sword nor the elements. Day and night he was shaken by strange fears. Evil omens and prodigies multiplied. The Chaldeans were impotent to console him. The gods by visions and miracles had inaugurated the Flavian dynasty: the gods, as the worst and weakest of the race might well believe, were now manifestly departing from the Flavian house. It was said, and it may have been said truly, that during the last eight months of Domitian's reign there was unusual stir in the atmosphere. Never since the days preceding the first Cæsar's fall had thunderstorms been so frequent or appalling. The Capitol was *struck from heaven*. The Flavian temple had been scarred by lightning; the bolts which fastened the emperor's golden statue on the arch of triumph were torn from their sockets. Of the three great deities, the august assessors in the Capitol, Minerva was regarded by Domitian as his special patroness. Her image stood by his bedside: his customary oath was by her divinity. But now a dream apprised him that the guardian of his person was disarmed by the guardian of the empire, and that Jupiter had forbidden his daughter to protect her favourite any longer. Scared by these accumulated horrors he lost all self-control, and petulantly cried, and the cry was itself a

Danger and
alarm of Do-
mitian,

A. D. 96.
A. U. 849.

Prodigies and
omens.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 14.; Dion, lxxvii. 14.

portent: *Now strike Jove whom he will!*¹ From supernatural terrors he reverted again and again to earthly fears and suspicions. Henceforward the tyrant allowed none to be admitted to his presence without being previously searched; and he caused the ends of the corridor in which he took exercise to be lined with polished marble, to reflect the image of any one behind him.² At the same time he inquired anxiously into the horoscope of every chief whom he might fear as a possible rival or successor. Many, it was said, he caused to be slain on the intimations thus conveyed to him of supposed danger. Cocceius Nerva, the senator who actually succeeded him, was only suffered to live because, though the presage of his destiny might excite alarm, Domitian was assured by an astrologer, in whom he specially confided, that he was doomed to die very shortly.³ Nerva's career was indeed brief, but Domitian's proved still briefer. On the other hand, the prince's enemies were equally busy. The battle of the horoscopes raged without and within the palace. Every one who hated and feared the tyrant, every one who hoped to leap into his place, consulted the secrets of futurity. The ruler was really in danger when hundreds, perhaps thousands, of his subjects were asking how long he was to live. One inquirer who imprudently announced, on the German frontier, the moment when Domitian should perish (a prophecy which was in fact punctually fulfilled), was sent in chains to Rome, interrogated, and sentenced. At the last moment the tyrant's death saved him, and he was even rewarded with a present from the successor. Another, it seems, had uttered a similar prediction still earlier. Being arrested and questioned, he had sought to confirm the assurance of his prophetic powers by declaring that he was destined himself to be shortly torn in pieces by dogs. To falsify this prognostication the criminal was committed to the flames; but the rains decended

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 15. ; Dion, lxxvii. 16.

² Suet. *Domit.* 14. : "parietes lapide phengite distinxit." For the phengites (ἀπὸ τοῦ φέγγους), see Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 22.

³ Dion, lxxvii. 15.

and extinguished them, and the dogs after all devoured his body as it lay among the half-burnt faggots.¹

This dismal incident was related to Domitian at supper. The victim of superstition had long since, it was said, penetrated futurity, and ascertained too surely the year, the day, the hour which was to prove fatal to him. He had learnt too that he was to die by

Apprehensions
of Domitian
succeeded by
fatal security.

the sword. Vespasian, himself, it was affirmed, not less addicted to the diviners art in his own and his children's interests, had ascertained the precise destiny which awaited his son, and once, when the young Domitian expressed apprehension of some mushrooms at table, had told him that he need not fear, for he was doomed to perish by steel, not by poison. The omens were now closing about the victim, and his terrors became more importunate and overwhelming. *Something, he exclaimed, is about to happen, which men shall talk of all the world over!* Drawing a drop of blood from a pimple on his forehead, *May this be all!* he added. He had fixed on the fifth hour of that very day as the direful period. His attendants, to reassure him, declared that the hour had passed. Embracing the flattering tale with alacrity, and rushing at once to the extreme of confidence, he announced that the danger was over, and that he would bathe and dress for the evening repast.² But the danger was just then ripening within the walls of the palace. The mysteries there enacted few, indeed, could penetrate, and the account of Domitian's fall has been coloured by invention and fancy. The story that a child, whom he suffered to attend in his private chamber, found by chance the tablets which he placed under his pillow, and that the empress, on inspecting them, and finding herself, with his most familiar servants, designated for execution, contrived a plot for his assassination, is one so often repeated as to cause great suspicion. But neither can we accept the version of Philostratus, who would have us believe that the murder of Domitian was the deed

¹ Suet. Dion, ll. cc.

² Suet. Domit. 15. 16.

of a single traitor, a freedman of Clemens, named Stephanus, who, indignant at his patron's death, and urged to fury by the sentence on his patron's wife, Domitilla, rushed alone into the tyrant's chamber, diverted his attention by a frivolous pretence, and smote him with the sword he bore concealed in his sleeve. It is more likely that the design, however it originated, was common to several of the household, and that means were taken among them to disarm the victim and baffle his cries for assistance. Stephanus, who is said to have excelled in personal strength, may have been employed to deal the blow; for not more, perhaps, than one attendant would be admitted at once into the presence.

Domitian assassinated.

Struck in the groin, but not mortally, Domitian snatched at his own weapon, but found the sword removed from the scabbard. He then clutched the assassin's dagger, cutting his own fingers to the bone; then desperately thrust the bloody talons into the eyes of his assailant, and beat his head with a golden goblet, shrieking all the time for help. Thereupon rushed in Parthenius, Maximus, and others, and despatched him as he lay writhing on the pavement.¹

The act revealed at the time to Apollonius.

That the actual occurrence of great events is at times revealed by divine intuition to seers and prophets at a distance, has been a common superstition.² As this catastrophe was portended by many omens beforehand, so, according to the story, at the moment of its befalling at Rome, the sage Apollonius, the philosopher of Tyana, himself a reputed wonder-worker, had mounted an eminence in Ephesus, and there calling the people around him, had exclaimed with inspired fervour, *Well done, Stephanus! bravo, Stephanus! slay the murder-*

¹ Circumstantial accounts of the assassination are given by both Dion and Philostratus, which differ principally in the assertion by the one that the attendants rushed in at their master's cries, and slew Stephanus in the fray, while the other says that they helped to kill the emperor. This latter version seems to correspond with the slighter notice of Suetonius. See Philostr. *Vit. Apollon.* viii. 25.; Dion, lxxvii. 18.; Suet. *Domit.* 17.

² Comp. Lucan, *Pharsal.* vii. 192.; Herod. ix. 69., on the battle of Plataea.

er ! Thou hast stricken ; thou hast wounded ; thou hast slain ! And this is true, declares the historian Dion, *this, I say, is true, let who will deny it*. Dion's account is identical with that of the biographer Philostratus ; but from this earnest asseveration it may be inferred that it was from no single source, and no partial authority, that the historian himself had derived it. The tradition, whatever else may be its value, seems at least to point to a wide-spread animosity, or possibly a wide-spread conspiracy, against the tyrant whose crimes after all were mostly confined to the narrow sphere of Rome, and who may not unjustly be reputed a discreet and able governor of the provinces. But Domitian had made himself enemies of the two classes who possessed the greatest power to blacken his memory. The nobles, whom he had insulted and tormented, poisoned, no doubt, the sources of history at Rome ; and the philosophers, whom he proscribed in the capital, spread their bitter feelings against him far and wide throughout the empire. I can only repeat what I have said before, that there are no facts to set against the overwhelming testimony by which Domitian is condemned ; but the moral influence of the philosophers at this period was felt in every quarter, and we know that in more modern times a prince would with difficulty obtain a hearing from posterity who had given mortal offence to both his nobility and his clergy.¹

The busts and coins of Domitian concur in presenting us with a countenance which bears a strong family resemblance to those of the elder Flavii, coarse and plebeian, but at the same time handsome, and not without marks of intellectual power. He appears to have been vain of his person, and to have suffered much vexation from the baldness which his countrymen re-

Contrast between the helms to the purple, and the elected princes.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 17. : "occisus est quarto decimo Kal. Oct." (Sept. 18, A. U. 849, A. D. 96.) Domitian was born Sept. 24. 804, and commenced his reign Sept. 13. 834 ; he perished, therefore, at the age of forty-five ; and his reign numbered fifteen years and five days. Comp. Dion, lxxvii. 18.

garded as a serious blemish. By one indeed who affected divinity such personal defects might be felt as real disadvantages, and the affectation of divinity, partly from vanity, but still more from policy, is the key to much of the conduct of this last of an upstart dynasty. The princes who inherited imperial power are all marked with a similar impress. Caius, Nero, and Domitian, were strongly influenced by the necessity of maintaining the charm of legitimacy, in default of a personal claim, as their title to power. The right of Julius and Augustus to a primacy among the Romans, if not strictly definable, was generally admitted as the meed of genius, or beauty, or even of might. It was the will of the gods, verified by manifest desert, and placed beyond human question. Tiberius was the chosen of Augustus; but this reflected merit he was anxious to fortify by the sanction of the senate, the representative of the Roman patriciate. Galba and Vespasian had been formally elected by the fathers, and their patrons had sustained their choice by alleging, in token of their fitness, the divine descent of both the one and the other. These were the emperors of the senate; they maintained for the most part the interests of the order in its struggles against popular or military encroachment. But the princes who were born in the purple knew that the principle of legitimacy was obnoxious to the caste which pretended to the right of election. They saw, on the other hand, that the notion of hereditary claim, which was scarcely recognized by the old Roman law in cases even of private descent, had a peculiar charm for the mixed races which now constituted the nation, and struck a chord of sympathy wherever the artificial rules of the early republic were unknown or forgotten. Hence the legitimate princes instinctively attached themselves to the people, and entered on a career of mutual jealousy with the nobles, which, after repeated acts of repression and tyranny, always ended in their overthrow and slaughter. When Suetonius tells us that Domitian devoted himself to studying the arts of Tiberius, and made that prince

his model, he is thinking only, I believe, of the deep dissimulation in which he proved so apt an imitator; but it does not seem that the later emperor, whose general policy was that of an archaic revival, followed in other respects the example of the earlier, who was a hard and logical materialist.

CHAPTER LXIII.

ACCESSION OF NERVA.—REACTION AGAINST THE TYRANNY OF DOMITIAN MODERATED BY THE CLEMENCY OF NERVA.—THE PRÆTORIANS DEMAND THE PUNISHMENT OF DOMITIAN'S ASSASSINS.—ASSOCIATION OF TRAJAN IN THE EMPIRE.—DEATH OF NERVA, A. D. 98. A. U. 851.—ORIGIN AND EARLY CAREER OF TRAJAN.—HIS POSITION AND OPERATIONS ON THE RHENISH FRONTIER.—ROMAN FORTIFICATIONS BETWEEN THE RHINE AND DANUBE.—TRAJAN'S MODERATION AND POPULARITY IN ROME.—PLINY'S PANEGYRIC.—EXPEDITION AGAINST THE DACIANS, A. D. 101.—TRAJAN CROSSES THE DANUBE.—HIS SUCCESSES AND TRIUMPH, A. D. 103.—SECOND EXPEDITION, A. D. 104.—BRIDGE OVER THE DANUBE.—CONQUEST AND ANNEXATION OF DACIA.—THE ULPIAN FORUM AND TRAJAN'S COLUMN AT ROME.—CONQUESTS IN ARABIA.—TRAJAN'S ARCHITECTURAL WORKS IN THE CITY AND THE PROVINCES.—VIGILANCE, SPLENDOUR, AND ECONOMY OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.—HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES, COUNTENANCE, AND FIGURE.—(A. D. 96–115, A. U. 849–868.)

DOMITIAN had fallen in the recesses of his palace by the hands of his own private attendants; but no sooner was the blow struck than it appeared how wide the conspiracy had reached, how far the conspirators' plans and precautions had extended. The chiefs of the senate had evidently consulted together, and ascertained among themselves the man on whom their own suffrages could be united, and who would be at the same time acceptable to the military power encamped at their gates. They had fixed on M. Cocceius Nerva, a man well versed in affairs, an accomplished speaker and writer, and whose family took rank among the official nobility.¹ Though he had attained the chief magistracy, he

Cocceius Nerva
elected emperor by the
senate.

A. D. 96.
A. U. 849.

¹ Martial addressing him when a private citizen speaks favourably of his literary accomplishments (viii. 70., ix. 27.), and says that Nero stood in awe of his poetical genius. He was twice Consul, in 71 and 90. Eutropius adds that he was "*nobilitatis mediæ*."

had not hitherto been eminent in public life, nor could he pretend to superior genius or striking fitness for command; his birth was not such as could cast a shade on the representatives of the ancient houses; his character was not of the severe and antique cast which would rebuke the laxity of his voluptuous courtiers; self-indulgent if not vicious himself, he might be expected to tolerate the weaknesses of others, while his age and infirmities would dispose him to study his own ease by yielding to the influences around him.¹ The senators hoped to guide him, the soldiers could hardly fear him; but his personal appearance was agreeable and imposing, and in the charm which soonest wins and retains longest the admiration of the populace, he might hope to rival Augustus and Tiberius, Nero and Titus.

Such was the ideal of a prince conceived at this epoch by the Roman nobles.² The moment was an important turning-point in the career of the empire. It is by a mere accident indeed that the series of imperial biographies compiled by Suetonius closes with Domitian, and that the name of the Cæsars is commonly given, by way of eminence, to the first twelve only of the Roman emperors. The title of Cæsar continued, I need hardly repeat, to be applied to the chief of the state from age to age, while the actual blood of the first of the number was exhausted, as we have seen, in Nero, the sixth in succession. Nevertheless, the death of Domitian and the accession of Nerva form a marked epoch in our history, on which we shall do well to pause. The empire now enters on a new phase of its existence. Hitherto the idea that the primacy was due to the most excellent man in the commonwealth, which easily led to the notion of the emperor's divine character and origin, had, except in the transient usurpations of

His character
and pretensions.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 1.; Victor, *Cæs.* 13., charges him with excess in wine.

² No doubt it might be said of Nerva, as was said before of Piso, the chief of the conspiracy against Nero: "sed procul gravitas morum . . . idque pluribus probabatur, qui in tanta vitiorum dulcedine summum imperium non restrictum nec perseverum volunt." Tac. *Ann.* xv. 48. Comp. also Tac. *Hist.* ii. 37.

Otho and Vitellius, been faithfully preserved. But the election of Nerva was avowedly a mere matter of political convenience. The senate at last was master of the situation, and it rejected pointedly the flimsy notions with which the nation had so long suffered itself to be amused. Cocceius Nerva was the son of an official, the grandson of a jurist, the great grandson of the minister of Augustus. His ancestors and all their affinities, for several generations, were well known to the senators, and they were very sure that no drop of celestial ichor had ever flowed in the veins of any one of them. Though the family had been settled in Italy for a hundred years, it was known to have come over from Crete, where centuries before it had been planted by an Italian progenitor.¹ For the first time the emperor of the Romans was neither a Julius nor a Claudius, nor a Domitius, nor even a Flavius, all ancient names of Latium or Sabellia; he was not the son of a god, nor the remotest descendant of one; he was not even in popular acceptance a Roman or an Italian, but a provincial by origin. The pedants of a later age, and probably the pedants of that age itself, remarked apologetically that the first of the Tarquins, the best and wisest of the Roman kings, had been not a Roman but an Etruscan; and they added truly that Rome had flourished by the foreign virtues she had grafted upon the parent stock.² But it

¹ Victor, *Cæs.* 12.: "quid enim Nerva Cretensi prudentius." In the *Epitome* he is styled "Narniensis," and this word some of the commentators would restore in the passage above cited. There is, indeed, no other authority for the presumed foreign origin of Nerva; but both in the *Cæsars* and the *Epitome*, Victor remarks particularly that hitherto all the emperors were either Roman by origin or at least Italian, as Otho and Vespasian: "hactenus Romæ, seu per Italiam orti imperium rexere: hinc advenæ." The foreign extraction of Nerva's successors generally is well ascertained. I have little doubt, therefore, that "Cretensis" is Victor's word.

² Victor, *Cæs.* 1. (Comp. *Epit.* 11.): "plane compertum urbem Romam externorum virtute atque insitivis artibus præcique crevisse." Martial has two brilliant panegyrics on Nerva: xi. 5., xii. 6. He compares him to Numa, bespeaks for him the reverence of the old Roman heroes, and declares finally that now at last,

"Si Cato reddatur, Cæsarianus erit."

was felt on all hands that a great revolution had practically been accomplished. The transition from Domitian to Nerva may be compared to the descent in our own history from James to William, from the principle of divine right to the principle of compact and convention.

The private career of Nerva had been that of his class generally. His disposition was naturally good, his understanding excellent and well cultivated, his morals pliant; his ambition, if such he had, had been kept under strict control, and, satisfied with the

Doubtful attitude of the legions.

dignities to which he could safely aspire, he had refrained from exciting his master's jealousy. He had thus reached in safety and good repute the ripe age of sixty-five, or, according to some accounts, seventy years. But Nerva was older in constitution than in years; the luxury in which he had indulged may have impaired his vital forces, and he now suffered perhaps for his imprudence by excessive weakness of digestion. In choosing him for their prince, the nobles, too timid themselves to dispute the throne with Domitian, may have looked to another proximate vacancy, when the succession might be environed with fewer perils. The prætorians seem to have felt no regard for the Flavian dynasty, which had never condescended to humour them. The legions on the Danube, to whom Domitian was personally known, and whose officers were of his direct appointment, murmured, and threatened to mutiny at his fall;¹ but the army of the Rhine was controlled by a brave and faithful commander, whose influence extended perhaps even further than his authority; a commander whose merits should have gained him the election of the senate without a competitor, had transcendent merit been the object of its search. It remained for Nerva to offer soon afterwards a share in the supreme power to the man to whose loyal support he owed no doubt his own tranquil succession. We shall soon arrive at the association

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 7., where the soldiers are said to have been recalled to their duty by the persuasive eloquence of the sophist Dion Chrysostomus.

of Trajan in the empire. We must first notice the circumstances of alarm and perplexity which compelled the new ruler, whom the senate and army had just chosen with acclamations, to strengthen his weak hands by resorting to this magnanimous assistant.

Domitian's body lay unheeded on his chamber floor, till it was removed by the pious care of his nurse Phyllis, and borne on a common bier by hired hands to his suburban villa on the Latin Way. From thence his ashes were privily conveyed to the temple of the Flavian family, and placed beside those of his niece Julia.¹ The people, who witnessed with unconcern the transfer of power to a new dynasty, took no interest in these humble obsequies, which the nobles, though fully resolved that the third of the Flavii should not share in the divine honours of his father and brother, did not care to interrupt. In the Curia indeed the tyrant's fall was hailed with tumultuous rejoicings. The fathers broke out in execrations and contumelies against him, placed ladders against the walls, and tore down his images and trophies. The city had been thronged with his statues, which now fell in the general proscription; those of marble were ground to powder, those of gold, silver and bronze, were melted down, and among them doubtless the noble colossus in the forum. The name of Domitian was effaced on every monument, and possibly his arch of triumph overthrown, as well as the Janus-arches with which he had decorated the thoroughfares.²

Indignities
heaped on the
memory of Do-
mitian.

¹ Suet. *Domit.* 17. ; Dion, lxvii. 18

² Suet. *Domit.* 23. ; Plin. *Paneg.* 52. ; Dion, lxviii. 1. Gruter gives several inscriptions in which Domitian's name is erased. The Senate refused to enrol their latest tyrant among the national divinities; but they did not carry their resentment to the memory of his predecessors. The Flavian temple in the forum was allowed to stand, and perpetuate the cult of Vespasian and Titus to a late age. It was burnt and again restored a hundred years afterwards. Possibly the destruction of Domitian's monuments was not so complete as it is represented; at least Procopius declares that he saw a bronze statue of this prince erect in his own day, on the right hand of the ascent to the Capitol from the forum. Procop. *Hist. Arcan.* 8.

But the effervescence of popular exultation was directed to more important objects. The exiles of the late proscription were recalled with acclamation, and this indulgence embraced the philosophers as well as the political sufferers.¹ There arose a general cry against the instruments of the tyrant's cruelty, and vengeance was demanded on the delators, among whom were senators, prætors, and consulars. Nerva, discreet and mild, would have been content with staying all the suits then in progress, with reversing all sentences in force against Domitian's victims, and compensating, as far as possible, those who had suffered; but the time-servers who had crouched most ignobly under the late tyranny were now the loudest in invoking punishment on its ministers, and attacked their foes with a violence not inferior to that which they had themselves endured.² Those who had no personal wrongs to avenge resented the ill-treatment of friends and connexions. Pliny, who had risen high under Domitian, seized the occasion to distinguish himself. His vanity does not allow us to give him credit for disinterestedness.³ It was a fine opportunity, so he himself proclaims, for attacking the guilty, for avenging the innocent, for *advancing oneself*.³ Of all the enormities of the tyrant's creatures, none, he says, had been greater than that of Certus, who had actually laid hands in the Curia on the noble Helvidius. With Helvidius Pliny was connected in friendship, and they had common friends in the Fannias and Arrias, the noble consorts of the Pætuses and Thræseas. Pliny assails Certus in the

Recall of the
exiles.

Prosecution of
delators.

Pliny's attack
on Certus.

¹ The ecclesiastical tradition that St. John was recalled on this occasion from his exile in Patmos (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 20.; Oros. vii. 11.) seems to be reflected from the popular recollection of this recall of the philosophers. The proscriptions of Domitian and the rehabilitations of Nerva refer simply to Rome or Italy.

² Plin. *Ep.* ix. 13.: "ac primis quidem diebus *reddita libertatis* pro se quisque inimicos suos incondito turbidoque more postulaverant, simul et opreserant."

³ Plin. l. c.: "materiam insectandi nocentes, miseros vindicandi, *se proferendi*."

senate; the culprit dares not appear; his friends in vain excuse or intercede for him in the face of the indignant fathers. Nerva refrains indeed from moving the assembly to institute a process against him, but refuses him the consulship, and even supersedes him in the prætorship. Certus dies within a few days; of mortification, it may be hoped; for thus much at least is popularly known, that the image of Pliny, sword in hand, ever floated from that moment before him in his disturbed imagination.¹ The moderation which Nerva prescribed to himself in regard to this great criminal seems to have marked his dealings with all the class, and the victims of the delators were probably little satisfied with the amount of favour they experienced from him. They had yet to wait for a prince of firmer hand or harsher character for the full revenge, which was not long in arriving. Much, however, as the nobles feared the treachery and falsehood of accusers among their own order, they lived in more constant dread of the denunciations of their retainers. It was hailed as a great safeguard of their lives and honour, when Nerva once more forbade the admission of a slave's testimony against his master, or even of a freedman against his patron.² The edict of Titus against false accusations was revived with additional penalties. One more pledge was necessary to restore the entire confidence of the fathers. Nerva came forward of his own accord, and vowed that no member of the order should suffer death under his administration. Then, and not till then, could Fronto, a distinguished senator, interpose to arrest the torrent of prosecution, and demand a general amnesty. *It is ill, he said, to have a prince under whom no one may do anything; but worse to have one who lets every one do as he will.*³

¹ Plin. l. c. He continues: "verane hæc, adfirmare non ausim; interest tamen exempli ut vera videantur."

² It is especially mentioned that Nerva forbade slaves to accuse their masters of "Jewish manners." Dion, lxxviii. 1.

³ Dion, l. c. Reimar believes him to have been C. Julius Fronto, and consul in 99; Clinton styles him Cornelius, and places his consulship in 100.

Such free speaking in the august presence was as rare as the clemency to which it pointed, and the historian who relates it immediately subjoins the remark, that Nerva was weak in health and constitution, leaving us to infer that there was some want of intellectual and moral vigour also in a prince who could listen so complacently and act so gently. Such indeed was Nerva's timidity, that on a report of Domitian being yet alive, he is said to have been quite unmanned, and only sustained through the crisis by the resolution of his immediate attendants.¹ However this may be, Nerva continued to act throughout his brief career with a consistent moderation, which was founded, we may hope, on principle. He forbade statues to be made of himself in the precious metals. He restored, as far as possible, to their proper owners the estates and fortunes which Domitian had confiscated. He divided portions of land among needy citizens in the spirit of the republican legislation, and was the first to devise a scheme, which received ample development under his successors, for relieving the poor by a state provision for their children.² To meet these extraordinary expenses he sold great masses of imperial property, the accumulated furniture of his palaces, vestments, jewels, and pleasure-houses, distributing at the same time liberal presents among his friends. The more sober portion of the citizens were not displeased at his retrenching the expenditure in games and spectacles, and forbidding so much blood to be shed in the amphitheatre, while he gratified the populace by allowing the return of the mimes.³ He owed it perhaps to the briefness of his tenure of power that he was enabled, liked Titus before him, to keep his vow not to cause the death of a senator, and the

Nerva's moderation mingled with timidity.

¹ Victor, *Epit.* 12.

² Dion, lxxviii. 2. Nerva founded or restored colonies at Scylacium and Verulæ in Italy, and Sitifa in Mauretania. Zumpt, *Comm. Epigr.* i. 399. Victor, *Epit.* 12.: "puellas puerosque natos parentibus egentibus sumptu publico per Italiam oppida ali jussit."

³ Nerva forbade the single combats of the Gladiators. Zonar. xi. 20.

favour in which he was held by the nobles shines forth in the famous panegyric of their spokesman Tacitus, that he reconciled the two conflicting political principles, the authority of the prince, and the freedom of the people.¹ The Romans indeed took pleasure in comparing him with the virtuous son of Vespasian, and the story told of Titus that he put swords in the hands of suspected conspirators, to show his just confidence in his own merit, was now repeated, whether truly or not, of Nerva.² Nor was it forgotten, however, that this good ruler took care to confirm the best measures even of the monster Domitian, and particularly the edict against mutilation.³ On reviewing his career, Nerva could boast with justice that he had committed no act which should prevent him from abdicating, if he thought fit, in perfect security. Nevertheless he did not escape, even during his lifetime, some harsh reflections on a clemency so ill appreciated. One evening Mauricius, just returned from banishment, was supping with him. Among the guests was Veiento, mentioned above among the vilest of Domitian's creatures, who had made himself bitter enemies by his zeal in denouncing and prosecuting the noblest Romans. The conversation fell on the subject of Catullus, then lately deceased, whose pandering to the jealous humours of Domitian has been already mentioned. *Were Catullus now alive*, said Nerva, *what would his fate be?* *He would be supping with us*, rejoined the free-spoken Mauricius, with a glance at the odious delator.⁴

¹ Tac. *Agrie*. 3. : "res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum et libertatem."

² Dion, lxxviii. 2.

³ Dion, l. c. Nerva is said to have forbidden the marriage of uncles with their brothers' daughters, a licentious innovation which Domitian, as we have seen, had discountenanced. All the tyrant's legislation would probably have been swept away had not his best enactments or views been sustained by his successor.

⁴ Plin. *Ep.* iv. 22. For the cause of Domitian's animosity to Junius Mauricius, see Tac. *Hist.* iv. 40., and for his banishment *Agrie*. 45. He was brother of Arulenus Rusticus, and suffered in the proscription of the year 93.

On the whole the senators were well satisfied with the prince they had set up, and they allowed his merits to be blazoned forth without a breath of detraction. The name of Nerva has been associated in after ages with the mildness of age, and the charm of paternal government.¹ Nevertheless he did not escape the penalty of his station. Plots were formed against him, to which even his good qualities, connected as they might seem to be with some weakness of character, may have partly conduced. An attempt was made to overthrow him by a certain Calpurnius Crassus, who boasted his descent from the family of the triumvir, and whose haughty temper, though controlled by the firmer hand of preceding despots, could not brook the supremacy of one of his own class, no more, as he himself professed, than the first of the senators. This conspiracy, however, was easily suppressed. The nobles of the city, even had they generally wished it, had long lost the art of conspiring. It would seem that only freedmen and soldiers could now overthrow an emperor. Nerva, faithful to his promise, declined to take the life of his enemy, and merely banished him to the pleasant retreat of Tarentum.² But a greater danger beset the prince of the senators from another quarter. When the nobles were satisfied the soldiers were generally discontented. Casperius Ælianus, præfect of the prætorians under the last emperor, whom Nerva had allowed to retain his important post, excited the guards of the palace against his too generous master, and encouraged them to demand the blood of Domitian's assassins. No inquiry, it seems, had been made into the act which had freed the Romans from their odious yoke; the perpetrators of the deed had not been punished, but neither had they been rewarded. It was enough that the deed was done, a deed of bad example for princes, yet such as both the prince and the people might fairly turn to their own advantage. Perhaps, had the assas-

Conspiracy of
Calpurnius de-
fected.

Mutiny of the
prætorians,
who demand
the punishment
of Domitian's
assassins.

¹ Auson. *Cæs.* 13. : "Nerva senex, princeps nomine, mente parens."

² Dion, lxxviii. 3.; Victor, l. c.

sins been citizens, they would have been hailed with public demonstrations of gratitude, like the tyrannicides of earlier days; but the act of slaves or freedmen was decorously passed over in silence. Nerva, however, opposed himself to this threatened violence with a noble courage. He bared his neck to the prætorians, whose fury he had no means of resisting, and offered himself as a sacrifice in place of their victims. But Casperius was master, at least for a moment, and directed the slaughter, without form of trial, of Parthenius, and such of his associates as could be arrested.¹ When the deed was done, nothing remained for the emperor but to make such excuse for it in public as the circumstances admitted. It might be represented as the hasty explosion of mistaken zeal, of extravagant loyalty, of blind devotion to the military sacrament. To the new emperor and to his well-wishers, the senate and people of Rome, it was a pledge that a life dear to the interests of peace and freedom should be well protected or signally avenged. But, whatever he might say in public, Nerva felt in his heart the disgrace of being thus controlled, an emperor by his soldiers, and resolved, if he could not punish this outbreak, at least never to subject himself to such

Nerva adopts Trajanus, and associates him in the empire.

another. He addressed a letter to Ulpius Trajanus, then commanding on the Rhine, offering him a share in the empire, and invoking him, according to the story, with a verse of Homer, to exact retribution in arms from the Greeks for the tears they had drawn from his sovereign.² Without awaiting a reply, Nerva ascended the Capitol, and convening the citizens before the temple of Jupiter, proclaimed his new colleague as his own adopted son, with the words, *I hereby adopt M. Ulpius Nerva Trajanus: may the gods bless therein the senate, the*

¹ Dion, l. c.; Victor, *Epit.* 24.: "sed neglecto principe requisitos jugulavere." Plin. *Paneg.* 6.: "magnum illud sæculo dedecus: magnum reipublice vulnus impressum est. Imperator et parens generis humani obsessus, captus, inclusus: ablata mitissimo seni servandorum hominum potestas." It must be remembered that Pliny uses all the emperors as foils to his own patron Trajan.

² Dion, l. c.: *νίσειαν Λαῶας ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσι.*

people, and myself. This act he again ratified with legal solemnities in the curia,¹ the nobles admitting without demur the exercise by the emperor of the rights common to every father of a Roman family, though in this case it implied no less than a pledge of the imperial succession. Their habitual deference to legal principles could not have blinded them to the political disability they thus practically imposed upon themselves. Henceforth, the power of adoption, with all its legitimate consequences, was regularly claimed by the reigning emperor, and after-ages acknowledged the wisdom with which for generations it was exercised.² The aged emperor was thus confirmed on his throne. The turbulent guards of the city trembled before the legions of a resolute chief, and shrank back into their camp. Nerva had mated his assailants: but his own game was now nearly played out, and he enjoyed but a short breathing space of ease and security before his death, which happened on the 23d of January, 98, after a reign of sixteen months and a few days only.

Death of Nerva,

A. D. 98.
A. U. 851.

The little our records have transmitted to us of the life and qualities of Nerva can be but inadequately supplied by the testimony of busts and medals to his personal appearance; nevertheless none of the emperors is more vividly characterized in the effigies which remain of him. The representations of Nerva in marble are numerous, and rank among the most interesting monuments we possess of this description. Among the treasures of antiquity preserved in modern Rome none surpasses, none perhaps equals, in force and dignity, the sitting statue of this emperor, which draws all eyes in the Rotunda

Personal appearance of Nerva.

¹ Dion, l. c. The adoption took place in October, 97.

² Claudian, xxviii. 417.:

"Hic illi mansere viri, quos mutua virtus
Legit, et in nomen Romanis rebus adoptans
Judicio pulcrum seriem, non sanguine duxit.
Hic proles atavum deducens Ælia Nervam,
Tanquillique Pii, bellatoresque Severi."

of the Vatican, embodying the highest ideal of the Roman magnate, the finished warrior, statesman, and gentleman of an age of varied training and wide practical experience.¹ Such a figure an Englishman might claim with pride as the effigy of a governor-general of half a continent. Unfortunately, we are too little acquainted with the original to pronounce on its agreement with his actual character; and we could wish that it had come to us as the portrait of an Agricola,—of one whose magnanimity we accept on trust from the panegyric of Tacitus. We do not hear, indeed, of Nerva that he ever commanded in the provinces, or led an army against the foes of the empire; nor, in sooth, can he be absolved from the charge of vices, common to the idle and luxurious of his rank and class, which in better and healthier times would argue great moral degradation; yet, if we really contemplate his likeness in the noble figure in the Vatican, we may fairly say of the prince as the historian affirms of the general: *you might easily deem him good; you would willingly believe him great.*²

*Your filial love, most venerable imperator, made you wish your succession to be long retarded; but the gods were eager to advance your virtues to the helm of state, which you had promised to direct. This being so, I invoke all happiness on yourself and on mankind, as befits the age which is illustrated by your name. For my own sake, and for the people's sake, I pray for your health both in mind and body.*³ Such is the form of congratulation with

Nerva's merit
in adopting
Trajan.

¹ The antiquity of this remarkable statue is acknowledged. It is asserted, however, that the upper and lower halves, the one naked, the other draped, did not originally belong to the same figure. Meyer on Winckelmann, *Gesch. der Kunst*, &c., xi. Buch. 3. Kap.

² Tac. *Agric.* 44.: "quod si habitum quoque ejus posteri noscere velint, decentior quam sublimior fuit; nihil metus in vultu, gratia oris supererat; bonum virum facile crederes, magnum libenter." Comp. Julian. *Cæsar.*: παρῆλθεν ἐπὶ τοῦτοις γέρων ὁφθῆναι καλὸς—λάμπει γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ ἐν τῷ γήρῳ τὸ καλὸς—ἐντυχεῖν πρῶτατος, χρηματίζειν δικαίωτατος.

³ Plin. *Ep.* x. 1. This is the first of a series of letters which embraces the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan, and gives us a curious insight into the manners of the times, and the relation of the prince to his people.

which Pliny hails the consummation of his friend's greatness, when the lately-adopted son and associate of the deceased Nerva was acknowledged by the senate and people as his legitimate successor. Nerva's career had been too brief to forfeit the hopes entertained of his clemency and discretion, but it allowed him to perform the one act by which he is distinguished among the Cæsars, the act by which he earned the blessings of his people, and secured the approbation of a late posterity. The choice he made of Trajan for his associate and heir was full, even at the time, of happy augury; and when he was suddenly removed but a few months later, the Romans were satisfied with the prospect he bequeathed them, and transferred their vows of allegiance, without a murmur or a misgiving, to one whom they fully believed to be the best and bravest of his countrymen. This loyal acceptance of the legitimate consequences of their own act was creditable to the sense and feeling of the Roman nobles; for it cannot be doubted that, had Nerva made himself an object of detestation, they would have repudiated his adoption as easily as any other of the legal acts of his principate. They proceeded to mark their respect and gratitude even more strongly, by reviving in his favour the rite of deification which they had refused to Domitian. To such a distinction Nerva, in theory only the first of the citizens, could have no such pretensions as a Julius, or even a Flavius. But the inconsequence of the proceeding might easily be overlooked, especially if Trajan, as we may suppose, himself solicited it. The act itself had now doubtless lost some portion of its earlier significance, and henceforth the claims of deceased princes to divinity were regarded as purely political.

M. Ulpius Trajanus, whose conduct in the purple has placed him in the foremost rank among the heroes of history, is little known to us before his elevation, and we may not at first sight perceive the grounds of the favour in which he was already held by his contemporaries.¹ The Ulpian Gens, to which he was attached,

Origin of the emperor Trajan, and career of his father.

¹ Eutropius, viii. 2., alone gives him the additional name of Crinitus :

though reputed ancient, was obscure, nor had it contributed a single name to the *Fasti*. But the Traian Gens, from which some ancestor of the emperor had passed by adoption into the Ulpian, was, perhaps, still less known; and even after the greatness and virtues of Trajan had drawn attention to it, historians and biographers could say no more of his family than that it was probably transplanted from Italy to Spain, when Scipio Africanus founded a colony at Italica on the Bætis. The Trajani were men of some note in the province, which gave birth to many personages distinguished afterwards at Rome. Trajanus, the father of the emperor, and Silius Italicus, the consul and poet, were natives of the same colony, and nearly contemporary in age; but their career was different, for while Silius, a man of fortune and literary acquirements, enjoyed fame and fashion in the capital, his fellow-citizen devoted himself to a career of arms, won victories over the Parthians and the Jews, gained the triumphal ornaments, and governed provinces. Trajanus had commanded the Tenth legion at the bloody storming of Joppa;¹ he had proved himself an adroit courtier as well as a gallant officer; and having advanced in due time to the consulship, reached the summit of official distinction as proconsul of Asia. After this we hear no more of him; but there seems reason to believe that he survived his son's elevation to power, and received from him after death the honours of apotheosis.²

perhaps a by-name of his family from the Turdetanian fashion of wearing their hair long. The name is not recognized on the monuments. We have no complete biography of Trajan. Notices of his birth and early career are found in Eutropius and Aurelius Victor, *Cæs.* 13., *Epit.* 13. Dion compressed the reigns of Nerva and Trajan into a single book, of which we possess an imperfect and confused epitome. Pliny, in his *Letters* and *Panegyric*, is our most valuable authority. These and other materials had long since been put together by Tillemont in the *History of the Emperors*, which was long generally acknowledged as the best compilation that could be made. But recently the elaborate work of Francke, *Geschichte Trajans*, has supplied many deficiencies in Tillemont, and the chronology of the latter year of this reign has been put on a more satisfactory footing.

¹ Joseph., *Bell. Jud.* iii. 11.

² Pliny in his *Panegyric* (A. D. 100) speaks of Trajan the father as then

Trajan, the son, was born, according to the most probable statement, towards the end of the year 53, and, accordingly, on his accession to the undivided sovereignty, had reached the middle of his forty-fifth year.¹ From Early career of the emperor Trajan. early youth he had been trained in the camp by his father's side, and had gained the love and confidence of the legions, among which he had waged the border warfare of the empire. He seems to have risen through the various grades of the service, and had held the post of military tribune for ten years, in which he had become familiar with all the methods and resources of Roman warfare, and had learnt the names of officers and soldiers in many distant garrisons, whose bravery and whose wounds he had personally witnessed.² He had shown talents for administration, as well as for war, and to his personal merits alone must he have owed his periodical recall from the camp to occupy the chief places in the civil government. It may be presumed that an officer who was deemed qualified to become prætor and consul, had enjoyed the ordinary advantages of training in rhetoric and literature; but Trajan's attainments in learning were slender, and modesty or discretion led him to conceal deficiencies rather than affect accomplishments he did not possess.³ His elevation to the consulship, which occurred in

dead, but not yet deified; the interval, we may suppose, would not be long. That he was actually "consecrated" appears from a medal inscribed: "Divi Nerva et Trajanus pater."

¹ The statements of Eutropius, Victor, and Eusebius vary by one or more years. Dion, who specifies the length of his reign and day of his death, makes him 41 at his accession. But as Pliny assures us that he served in his father's Parthian campaign, which can hardly be placed later than 67, he must have been then at least 14 years of age, and, therefore, the latest date we can assign to his birth would be 53, that is, 44 years before his adoption.

² Plin. *Paneg.* 15.

³ Victor, *Epit.* 13.: "quum ipse parca esset scientiæ, moderateque eloquens." Dion, lxxviii. 7.: παιδείας μὲν γὰρ ἀκριβοῦς, ὅση ἐν λόγοις, οὐ μετείχε. Comp. Julian, *Cæsar.* of Trajan: ὁ δὲ καίπερ δυνάμενος λέγειν ἐπὶ βραθυμίας . . . φθεγγόμενος μᾶλλον ἢ λέγων. An epigram in the Anthologia is ascribed to Trajan, and he composed commentaries on his Wars in Dacia. See Reimar on Dion, l. c. The story that he was instructed by Plutarch may be rejected

91, may have seemed even beyond his deserts, and hence the story which obtained currency, at least at a later period, that it was attended with omens portending his own accession to the purple, and at the same time the sudden downfall of his colleague Glabrio.¹ When his term of office expired, Trajan succeeded to a government in Spain, which he afterwards exchanged for a command in the lower Germany. The tribes beyond the Rhine had been exasperated rather than repressed by the idle campaigns of Domitian, and required for their control a firm hand and an experienced eye. Trajan,

His discreet
moderation as
commander on
the Rhine.

while faithful to his emperor, had a discreet regard to his own interests also. He plunged into no aggressive warfare, but was satisfied with the fame of vigilance and prudence for preserving peace on the frontiers.² By such self-restraint he escaped, perhaps, the mortification of an Agricola, retained his post throughout the latter years of his jealous master, and reaped the fruits of his temperate reserve, when the prince of the senate required the protection of his best officer against his own mutinous guards.

When, indeed, Nerva was reduced to seek this protection, his choice would necessarily lie between the commanders of the two great European divisions of the Roman forces, the prefect of the Rhenish, and the prefect of the Danubian legions; for the chief of the army of Syria lay at too great a distance to compete, at least at the moment, with either of these formidable champions. But of the military triumvirate in whose hands the fate of Rome now actually resided, the commander on the Rhine had generally the most decisive influence; and it was fortunate for the feeble emperor that he possessed at this juncture in his lieutenant Trajan the most devoted as well as the bravest of partisans. The adoption of such a colleague silenced disaffection; the few remaining months of Nerva's reign were

as a fiction, founded, perhaps, on the favour he undoubtedly showed to that philosopher.

¹ *Suet. Domit. 12.*

² *Plin. Paneg. 14.*

passed in tranquillity and honour; and even the prætorians acquiesced without a murmur in the accession of the valiant captain on the Rhine.

The messengers of the senate, charged with the vows of all the citizens, found Trajan among his soldiers at Cologne, and there announced to him his succession.¹ He had already been nominated to his second consulship; he now assumed all the great functions

Trajan gives
pledges for
moderation.

of state which together constituted the imperial power. He replied with a letter to the senate, in which he promised, after his father's example, that no magnate of their order should suffer capitally during his reign; and this formal announcement was accepted as a pledge of constitutional government. Nor was it an empty compliment. It implied a promise to conduct affairs in a spirit of moderation; not to pamper the soldiers or the people; not to scatter the public treasures in needless debauchery; not to create a dire necessity for rapine, which must mark for plunder and slaughter the wealthiest and noblest of the citizens. So perfect was the content of all classes, so easily did the wheels of administration move in the capital, that the new emperor was not required even to hasten to Rome, and assume the reins in person. He had conceived a system of government different from that of any of his predecessors. Though not wanting in ability for the direction of civil affairs, his experience and his tastes were chiefly military. Long accustomed to the life of the camps, he had been debarred by his master's jealousy from the full exercise of his genius for war; but he had laboured in restoring the discipline of the legions, and had attached them personally to him, even while forced to restrain their ardour for more active employment. He flattered himself that he had prepared a career of victory by the perfection to which he had brought the instrument which was to accomplish it. Trajan completed the fortification of the Rhenish frontier by the establishment of colonies and military

¹ Victor, *Epit.* 13.: "Hic imperium apud Agrippinam nobilem Galliæ coloniam accepit."

posts. Nigh to the ruined leaguer of *Castra Vetera* he planted the station which bore for centuries the name of *Ulpia Trajana*. He threw a bridge across the Rhine at *Mainz*, and settled a colony ten miles beyond the river, possibly at *Höchst*, and another further south, at the medicinal springs of *Baden Baden*.¹ He repaired and strengthened the lines commenced by *Drusus*, and extended by *Tiberius*, which ran from a point nearly opposite to *Bonn*, in an oblique direction, across the *Taunus* district; and he contemplated carrying a continuous fosse and rampart to the bank of the *Danube*. The upper waters of the two great rivers of western Europe approach very near to each other in the *Black Forest*, where the *Danube* has its source; but from thence they rapidly diverge to the north and east respectively. The wedge of land between them had, from the time of *Cæsar's* contest with the *Suevi*, been abandoned for the most part by the natives to a slender but constant immigration of Romanized Gauls; and these new occupants gladly compounded for the protection or countenance of the empire by a tribute, to which was given the name of *tenths*.²

The Agri Decumates.

The tract thus held received the title of the *Agri Decumates*, or *Tithe-land*; but we have no record of it in history till we hear of the undertaking of *Trajan*, who is supposed to have commenced at least the long fortified lines by which it was eventually protected throughout.³ Nor

¹ The "*munimentum Trajani*" (*Ammian. Marcell. xvii. 1.*), about ten miles from *Moguntiacum*, seems to correspond with the position of *Höchst*. *Mannert. Geog. iii. 463.* *Baden Baden* was *Aquæ*, or *Aurelia Aquensis*.

² *Tac. Germ. 29.*: "*levissimus quisque Gallorum et inopia audax dubiæ possessionis solum occupavere. Mox limite acto promotisque præsidiiis, sinus Imperii et pars provinciæ habentur.*" The *limes* here is not a boundary line, but a road from the centre for the rapid transmission of troops to the frontier.

³ One section of this fortification (from the *Westerwald* across the *Main* to the *Altmühl*, *Niebuhr, Lect. on Rom. Hist. ii. 252.*) is ascribed, according to some critics, by *Frontinus* to *Domitian*: *Strategem. i. 3. 10.*: "*Imperator Cæsar Domitianus Aug. quum Germani more suo e saltibus et obscuris latebris subinde impugnarent nostros, tutumque regressum in profunda sylvarum haberent, limitibus per centum viginti millia passuum actis, non mutavit tantum*

can we determine how far this emperor proceeded in the accomplishment of this design, which was prosecuted by his next successor, and completed perhaps, or restored and strengthened, by Probus, a century and a half later. Of this great work,—the greatness of which lay, however, in the extent and vigour of the design rather than in the massiveness of its execution,—sufficient vestiges even now remain to trace it from river to river; but these vestiges consist at most of faint marks of a mound and ditch, which seem to have been strengthened by a palisade, with watchtowers at intervals, but to have been nowhere combined with a wall of masonry.¹ Nor, if Trajan commenced these works, can the date of his share in them be ascertained; as, however, he remained but one year on the Rhenish frontier after his accession, and never returned to it, we may conclude that his stations and colonies, and military lines, were planned, at least, and undertaken while he was yet a subject.

Commencement of a rampart from the Rhine to the Danube.

Having thus completed his arrangements in this quarter, Trajan at last bent his steps homeward, and made his entry into the city in the year 99. He had received the Tribunitian power at the time of his adoption; the title also of Germanicus, together with the name of his father Nerva, had been bestowed on him on the same occasion. The consulship, with which he had been a second time invested while the late emperor was still living, he declined to claim for the ensuing year, being himself absent from the city, from respect, perhaps, to the ancient usage; nor would he allow the senate to salute him as Father of his

Trajan enters Rome, A. D. 99.

statum belli, sed subiecit ditioni suæ hostes quorum refugia nudaverat." But this I rather interpret of a road driven into the heart of a country, than of a limitary rampart. So Frontinus again, i. 5. 10.: "ab altera parte limitem agere coepit, tanquam per eum erupturus."

¹ The line of "Trajan's wall" has been carefully examined within the last few years by Mr. Yates, whose interesting account of it I have read, if I am not mistaken, in a recent volume of *Transactions* of the Archaeological Institute.

country till he had presented himself to the citizens, and earned the endearing appellation by his courtesy and moderation.¹ His demeanour as well as his actions were such as befitted the true patriot and citizen, and excited accordingly the warmest enthusiasm. Throughout his progress from Germany he abstained from the demands and exactions usually made even on subjects and provincials. His entry into Rome was a moral triumph. Martial, in a few graphic touches, brings vividly before us the man, the place, and the people.² Pliny exerts himself to describe more elaborately the extreme condescension and affability of the prince, who deigned to approach the home of law and freedom on foot, unattended by guards, distinguished only by the eminence of his stature, and the dignity of his bearing; allowing the citizens of all grades to throng about him; admitting the greetings of the senators on his return as emperor, with the same graciousness with which he had accepted them when he went forth as a fellow-subject; addressing even the knights by name; paying his vows to his country's gods in the Capitol, and entering the palace of the Cæsars as the modest

¹ Pliny, *Paneg.* 20., declares, with headlong adulation, that every emperor before Trajan had assumed this title without hesitation on the day of his accession. We know, however, that Augustus long deferred it; so did Tiberius (*Tac. Ann.* i. 72., *Suet. Tib.* 67.) and Vespasian (*Suet. Vesp.* 12.). Capitolinus, indeed, asserts that Pertinax, nearly a century later, was the first of the emperors who assumed it at once.

² Martial, x. 6.:

“Felices quibus urna dedit spectare coruscum
Solibus Arctois sideribusque ducem,” &c.

But this is in anticipation of the hero's arrival, for which the poet proceeds to offer his vows in the next epigram: “Nympharum pater amniumque Rhene . . . Trajanum populis suis et Urbi, Tiberis te dominus rogat, remittas.”

Compare the verses of Claudian on Stilicho's entry into Rome, xxii. 397, foll. The reader should be warned against the confusion of dates in the arrangement of Martial's pieces. In book x. epigrams 6, 7., and probably 71., refer to Trajan: but xi. 4, 5., though inscribed in the edition to Nerva Trajanus, undoubtedly to Nerva. In book xii. epigram 8. refers to the earlier, and 8. to the later emperor.

owner of a private mansion.¹ Nor did Trajan stand alone in this exhibition of patriotic decorum. His wife, Plotina, bore herself as the spouse of a simple senator; and as she mounted the stair of the imperial residence, turned towards the multitude, and declared that she was about to enter it with the same equanimity with which she should wish hereafter, if fate so required, to abandon it.² Her behaviour throughout her husband's career corresponded with this commencement. Nor less magnanimous was the conduct of Trajan's sister, Marciana, who inhabited the palace in perfect harmony with the empress, and assisted her in maintaining its august etiquette. Trajan himself renewed by word of mouth the oath he had before made in writing, that he would never harm the person of a senator, an oath which he continued faithfully to respect. But he was not unmindful of his parent's adjuration, and sought out for condign punishment the mutineers who had trampled on Nerva's weakness. Such was his confidence in his authority over the soldiers, that he ventured to reduce the customary donative to one-half the amount to which his predecessors had raised it. Not a murmur was heard even in the camp of the prætorians; and when he handed to the prefect the poniard which was the symbol of his office, he could boldly say, *Use this for me, if I do well; if ill, against me.*³ We have seen that the lenient or feeble Nerva, though he revived the edicts of Titus against the delators, had failed to satisfy the fury of his nobles in punishing them. Trajan had no such weakness, and showed no such moderation. Giving the rein at last to the passions of the sufferers, he

Magnanimity
of Plotina, his
wife, and Mar-
ciana, his sister.

¹ Pliny, *Paneg.* 22, foll.: "qui dies ille quo expectatus desideratusque urbem ingressus es? . . . gratum erat cunctis quod senatum osculo exciperes, ut dimissus osculo fueras, &c. . . . quod latus tuum crederes omnibus," &c.

² Dion, lxxviii. 5.

³ Dion, lxxviii. 16.: Victor, *Cæs.* 13. This famous saying was remembered in the last decline of Rome, and alluded to by Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 5.:

"Vix habuit mores similes cui, teste Senatu,
In se etiam tractum commiserat Ulpus ense."

executed what, according to Pliny's account, we might call a *razzia* upon the remnant of the culprits. Pliny describes the extraordinary spectacle of a number of these people dragged in chains through the circus before the assembled citizens, with every circumstance of deliberate insult; and when the most obnoxious had been selected for capital punishment, the rest were shipped for exile beyond sea, on the craziest barks in the stormiest weather.¹

The famous *Panegyric*, an impressive monument of this illustrious reign, which seems to have been delivered by Pliny, as consul, on the third anniversary of Trajan's Tribunitian power, not only celebrates such instances of his magnanimity and justice, but enumerates also many wise and beneficent measures he had already carried into effect. Our review of these may be deferred till we can comprise the whole course of his civil administration, which was soon interrupted by a long interval of warlike operations. So favourable, however, was the impression Trajan had made during his sojourn in the city, that the senate decreed him, in addition to the other titles usually borne by the emperors, the transcendent appellation of *Optimus*, or the Best.² Nor was this a merely formal compliment. While the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, of Magnus and Germanicus, were suffered to descend from sire to son, no other emperor was honoured with the special appellation of *Optimus*; though it is said to have been usual,

Trajan receives
the title of *Optimus*.

A. D. 100.

A. U. 853.

¹ "Congesti sunt in navigia raptim conquisita, ac tempestatibus dediti. Abirent, fugerent vastatas delationibus terras, ac si quem fluctus ac procellæ scopulis reservassent, hic nuda saxa et inhospitale litus incoleret." *Paneg.* 34. Similar severities had been used before by Titus (Suet. *Tit.* 8., see above), but the wrongs sustained had been less, and they had not perhaps been celebrated with such passionate exultation.

² Pliny, *Paneg.* 2. 88. It has been remarked, indeed, that the title "*Optimus*" does not appear on Trajan's coins before his eleventh year, and we must suppose that, though formally assigned him by the senate, he forebore for a time to assume it. Dion (lxxviii. 23.) refers this title to a still later date. He adds that Trajan was more proud of it than of any other, as a compliment to his character rather than to his exploits.

in later times, for the senate, on the accession of each new chief of the republic, to exclaim, as the highest token of its admiration, that he was more fortunate than Augustus, and better than Trajan.¹

But the flattery of the senate, even in the polished phrases of Pliny, the most accomplished of his order, must have been irksome to a man of Trajan's plain sense. We can well believe that he soon began to fret under the restraints of deference to a society by which he must have been frequently mortified, and longed to fling himself into the stir and movement of the military career. Confined for many years within the defences of the camp, he had there assiduously prepared all the machinery of aggressive warfare, and he was now anxious to go and prove it. In the fourth year of his reign he quitted the city to undertake war on a large scale, and with great ends in view, against the long-formidable Dacians.² The motives ascribed to him are, indignation at the successes which these barbarians could boast in their previous conflicts with the empire, and disgust at the payment of an annual tribute to which Domitian is said to have consented. But these, perhaps, were mere pretences. Confident in the perfection of the instrument he now wielded, he trusted by its means to emulate the glories of a Julius or an Alexander. The legions of the Rhine also, however exact their discipline, were doubtless burning for employment; those on the Ister were turbulent as well as impatient. The founder of a new dynasty could hardly depend on their fidelity without humouring their martial instincts. We must consider, too, that

Trajan marches
against the Da-
cians,

A. D. 101.
A. U. 854.

¹ Eutrop. viii. 5. : "hujus tantum memoriæ delatum est, ut usque ad nostram ætatem non aliter in Senatu principibus acclamaretur, quam, felicior Augusto melior Trajano!" One of Trajan's most popular sayings is also recorded by this writer: "talem se imperatorem esse privatis, quales esse sibi imperatores privatus optasset."

² Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* The *Panegyric* of Pliny was delivered in the autumn preceding, when Trajan was designated consul for the fourth time. This consulship he held in 101.

the vast and increasing expenses of a military government required to be maintained by extraordinary means, and Trajan may have launched himself against the foe beyond the frontier to obviate the necessity of levying fresh contributions on his own subjects. He meant that his wars should be self-supporting; that their expenses should be defrayed by the conquered enemy, and the cupidity of the soldiers satisfied with the plunder of foreigners. The Dacians, though in name barbarians, seem to have been actually possessors of considerable wealth, and to have attained to a certain degree of social refinement. They were a branch of the Getæ, a people of whom it was remarked that they stood nearest to the Greeks in their natural aptitude for civilization;¹ and besides the stores they accumulated in their repeated inroads on the Greek and Roman settlements, their country abounded in mines of gold and silver, as well as of iron. Such were the glittering spoils which tempted the long-restrained ardour of the legionaries, even more than their fertile plains and illimitable pastures.

The Getæ and the Thracians, of cognate origin, occupied the region of Bulgaria and Roumelia, and, according to tradition, the Dacians were an off-shoot from these nations, which crossed the Ister, overran the Banat, Wallachia and Moldavia, and finally fixed its strongholds in the mountainous district of Transylvania. In the second century they may be considered as occupying the broad block of land bounded by the Theiss, the Carpathians, the lower Danube or Ister, and the Pruth. In the centre of this region rose the great mountainous tract in which the Maros takes its rise,

Geographical
position of the
Dacians.

Their pre-
datory incur-
sions.

¹ Justin. xxxii. 3.: "Daci quoque soboles Getarum sunt." Dion. lxvii. 6.: *Δακοὺς δὲ αὐτοὺς προσαγορεύω, ὥσπερ πον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι σφᾶς ὀνομάζουσιν· οὐκ ἄγνοῶν ὅτι Ἑλλήνων τινὲς Γέτας αὐτοὺς λέγουσιν, εἰτ' ὀρθῶς εἴτε καὶ μὴ λέγοντες.* The patriotic boasts of Jornandes (*de Reb. Get.* i. 5.) leant probably on some foreign authority: "unde et pæne omnibus barbaris Gothi sapientiores semper exstiterunt, Græcisque pæne consimiles." See Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 71. Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.* i. 452

and the basin of this river, almost inclosed by a circumvallation of rugged declivities, contained the chief cities of the Dacian people. Here was the residence of their king, here they stored their plunder; hither, when pressed by an invading foe, they retreated, and generally found themselves secure. For the marshes of the lower Theiss and Maros effectually protected them on the west, and the three passes of the Iron Gate, the Volcan, and the Rothenthurm, were easily defensible against an enemy from the south.¹ Hence they issued in mid-winter, when the deep alluvial soil of the Danubian valley was indurated by frost, and the great river itself congealed, or choked with ice, and crossing the stream at a season when the Romans had desisted from their summer expeditions, and quietly piled their arms, carried fire and sword into the defenceless provinces.² On the return of fine weather, the Romans armed again, and defied the barbarians, who indeed were unable to stem the current of the Danube: but if they sought to make reprisals, it was a long and difficult task even for Roman engineers to bridge a stream so mighty, and the Dacians had at least ample time to betake themselves to their mountains. The attempts of Domitian's generals to penetrate into the strongholds of Decebalus had been always frustrated, and sometimes with loss and disgrace. To purchase peace by tribute, under whatever name or colour, was a dishonourable and indeed a precarious resource. The time was come when Rome, with a well-appointed army, and under a military ruler, could, by one sustained effort, termin-

¹ This configuration of the Dacian territory seems to explain the Roman habit of describing the stronghold of the nation as "their mountain." *Stat. Sylv.* iii. 3. 169.: "Quæque suum Dacis donat clementia montem;" i. 1. 80.: "tu tardum in fœdera montem Longo Marte domas." *Theb.* i. 20.: "Et conjurato dejectos vertice Dacos."

² The "conjuratus Ister" of Virgil (*Georg.* ii. 497.) is explained by the Scholiast after a writer named Aufidius Modestus, from the custom of the Dacians to draw water from the Danube, when about to undertake an expedition, and swear by it not to return till they had conquered. *Ukert, Geogr.* iii. 2. p. 608.

ate this state of suspense and suffering. The Roman Peace demanded War in earnest.

Seven legions may be enumerated, which, together with their auxiliaries, with ten cohorts of prætorians, and a force of Batavian cavalry, took part in the campaigns of Trajan against the Dacians, though we cannot safely affirm that the whole of this mighty armament was employed together in any one of his expeditions.¹ Drawn in part from the stations permanently located on the Mæsan frontier, in part from the military reserves in Illyricum and Dalmatia, in part also from the great army established on the Rhine, a force of sixty or perhaps eighty thousand veterans was mustered on the banks of the Danube and the Save. Segestica, the modern Sissek, was the spot selected by Trajan for the base of his operations. From this place, which had been long the common arsenal of Mæsia and Pannonia, he directed his munitions of war to be floated down the Save to its confluence with the greater river.² At Singidunum he passed in review the legions of either province, led his united forces to the passage of the Morava, and thence a few miles further to a post named Viminacium, the modern Kastolatz, where the Danube, flowing with a broad but tranquil stream, offered facilities for the construction of a bridge of boats. Here commence the highlands of the Danubian valley, the southernmost spurs of the Carpathians plunging into the river and confronting the no less rugged abutments of the northern spurs of the Balkan. The stream, confined for thirty miles between these precipi-

The first Dacian campaign.

A. D. 101.
A. U. 854.

Trajan descends the Save, and throws bridges across the Danube.

¹ Francke (*Gesch. Trajans*, p. 95, foll.) traces all these legions from inscriptions and other records. They were the i. Minervia, the ii. Adjutrix, the iv., v., vii., xi., and xiii.

² These localities are thus specified from conjecture, founded on the known direction of the lines of road in these parts, and the indications on the Trajan column, which represent the assembling of the army, its magazines and encampments, the crossing of more than one river, and other details of its march. See the interpretation in Francke's *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 192, foll.

tous cliffs, foams in a furious torrent, exasperated by the rocky ledges which at some points intercept its course from one bank to the other. Again the river expands and resumes its tranquil majesty, and near its confluence with a little stream called now the Tjerna, a second bridge seems to have been also thrown across it. From these two points the Danube was henceforth regularly crossed, and the Romans executed roads from both the one and the other, by which to penetrate into Dacia. The more western route led into the Banat by the valley of the Theiss, keeping the mountains to the right; the eastern ascended the Tjerna, having the mountains on the left, till, on a sudden change in their direction, it was required to breast them. Having surmounted the ridge, it descended into the valley of the Temes, and met the former road near Karansebes, at the junction of the Temes and Bistra. These are torrents of little note; but the gorge of the Bistra, through which a way was afterwards carried, led to the pass most properly designated the Iron Gate, the key of the Maros valley, and of the Dacian mountain-land which surrounds it. Trajan's army crossed the Danube in two divisions at the spots above indicated. He seems himself to have taken the western route;¹ but the two divisions met, as was concerted, and forced the pass together. The resistance of the Dacians, and the obstacles presented by nature, were equally overcome. The Roman armies alighted in the heart of the enemy's country, and established themselves in the royal city of Zermizegethusa.²

The various
routes into the
highlands of
Dacia.

¹ The stations on this route (the western) are given in the Peutinger Table, and, by a curious chance, a few words of Trajan's own commentaries on this war, preserved by Priscian, suffice to show that he advanced by it. The fragment runs: "inde Berzobim, deinde Aixi, processimus." *Comp. Tab. Peut.*: "Bersovia xii.; Ahitis iii.; Caput. Bubuli x.; Tivisco." Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 106, with reference to Priscian, lvi.; Putsch, *Auct. Gramm. Lat.*, p. 682.

² Dion, lxxviii. 9. "Zermizegethusa, i. e., Zarmi-tzeket-Kusa, mansion couvert de peaux." Bergmann, *Les Gètes*, p. 59.

This place, which became the seat of a Roman colony and acquired the name of Ulpia Trajana, can be clearly identified with the modern village of Varhely, on a little stream called the Strehl, a tributary of the Maros. Trajan had not yet penetrated into the heart of the Dacian stronghold, and the barbarians continued to defend themselves with obstinacy. Their chief, who bore the name of Decebalus, though we cannot affirm that he was the same who twelve years before had proved so formidable to Domitian, met the new invader with not less valour and constancy. A people called the Burri, who are supposed to have dwelt about the sources of the Theiss, sent a message to the emperor, written, it was said, on the surface of a large fungus, requiring him to desist from his attack on their kinsmen; but such interference was contemptuously disregarded. Trajan brought the enemy at last to bay, and in a great battle at a place called Tapæ, the site of which is not determined, routed them with much slaughter.¹ The care he showed for his wounded soldiers endeared him to the legions, which now pushed on with alacrity, and forced their way into the inner circle of hills beyond the Maros, in which the Dacian chief resided. Here Decebalus confessed himself worsted, and sued for peace.

Of the above details, slender as they are, little is derived from the direct records of history. The sculptures of Trajan's column, the noblest monument of Roman warfare, have been ingeniously interpreted into a connected narrative of events. The bridges he constructed, the fortresses he attacked, the camps he pitched, the enemies he routed, are here indicated in regular sequence. The Romans are distinguished by their

Trajan encounters and worsts Decebalus.

A. D. 102.
A. U. 855.

Records of this campaign preserved on the Trajan column at Rome.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 8. Tapæ is the name of the spot where Julianus defeated the Dacians in the reign of Domitian. The traditions of the country, guided perhaps by the guesses of the antiquarians, point to a place called Crossfeld near Thorda, where a plain is said still to bear the name of Prat-Trajan. This spot seems too far in the interior. The circumstance of the modern appellation is of no real value.

well-known arms and ensigns. The captives they take, the sacrifices they offer, are vividly delineated. The Moorish horsemen, on the one hand, are designated by light-clad warriors riding without reins; the Rhoxolani, on the other, by mounted figures decked in a panoply of mail. Trajan himself harangues, directs, offers his mantle to bind the wounds of his soldiers, takes his seat on the tribunal, or stalks under an arch of triumph. The submission of Decebalus is represented by a troop of envoys bearing the sheepskin cap, which expresses their rank as nobles, and prostrating themselves before the conqueror. The capitulation seems to have been unconditional. The Dacians delivered up their arms, surrendered the fugitives and deserters, razed their remaining strongholds, and restored the eagle lost under Fuscus.¹ Decebalus consented to form an alliance with the Romans, by which he bound himself to regard their friends and their enemies as his own, and to abstain from enrolling any Roman subject in his armies; for many such, it seems, he had entertained in his service. He yielded possession to the victors of the places they had taken by arms. Finally, he came in person, and paid homage to the emperor. The terms thus exacted in the field were ratified in due form in the senate-house, and Trajan, leaving an army of occupation at Zermizegethusa, and fortifying various posts of importance, quitted the conquered territory and again presented himself to the exulting citizens.²

The victor's return to Rome was solemnized by the reception of Dacian envoys in the senate-house, where they laid down their arms, and joining their hands in the attitude of suppliants, repeated their master's promise of submission, and solicited the favour and protection of the empire. Trajan celebrated

Trajan returns
to Rome and
triumpha,

A. D. 103.
A. U. 856.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 9.

² Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 113, foll. The Moorish cavalry are supposed to represent a detachment of auxiliaries accompanying the Roman army, and led by Lusius Quietus, a Mauretanian officer, of whom we shall hear more in the sequel.

a triumph, and received the surname of Dacicus. The rejoicings on this occasion were accompanied by magnificent shows of gladiators, which were congenial to his martial spirit; but we should less have expected the rude warrior to recall the dancers to the theatre; still less that a personal liking for one of these performers should have induced him to this unworthy compliance.¹ But Trajan, with all his valour, generosity, and self-command, was coarse both by nature and habit, and his vicious tastes were not confined to excess in wine.² His self-respect was preserved only by the bluntness of his moral sense; and so far it was fortunate for mankind, who profited by the serenity with which he could rise from indulgences which even the Romans regarded as weaknesses, to the firm and prudent exercise of his lofty functions. He plunged again into all the details of the civil administration, and while he devised wise and liberal measures, and watched over their execution, he attended assiduously on the tribunals, and was seen dispensing justice in

¹ The circumstances of this triumph are only known to us in the meagre abridgment of Dion (lxviii. 10.). Statius, the court-poet of an earlier reign, was now dead; Pliny was absent, having just left Rome for the government of Bithynia (A. D. 103. Clinton's *Fest. Rom.*); and Martial had recently returned to his native Bilbilis. The twelfth book of the *Epigrams* was sent to Rome from Spain. In xii. 8. Martial seems to allude to the foreign captives or envoys who attended the celebration of Trajan's triumph:

“Parthorum proceres, ducesque Serum,
Thracæ, Sauromatæ, Getæ, Britanni:”

and in xii. 15. he celebrates the emperor's liberality in surrendering to public objects the splendid furniture of the palace:

“Quicquid Parrhasia nitebat aula,
Donatum est oculis, deisque nostris.”

² We must be satisfied with Dion's apology, lxviii. 7.: ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐκ τούτων ἢ αἰσχρὸν ἢ κακὸν ἐδεδράκει ἢ ἐπεπόνθει, ἐπηγορίαν ἂν εἶχε· νῦν δὲ τοῦ τε οἴνου διακάρως ἐπινε καὶ νήφων ἦν, ἐν τε τοῖς παιδικοῖς οὐδένα ἐλύπησε. Trajan's inebriety is noticed by Spartan in *Had.* 3. Lamprid. in *Alex. Sev.* 39. Julian, *de Cæsar.*: οὐκ ἦν ἔξω τοῦ δυνάσθαι ῥητορεύειν, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς φιλοποσίας ἀμβλύτερος ἑαυτοῦ πολλὰκις ἦν. Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: “vinolentiam, quo vitio, uti Nerva agebatur, prudentia molliverat, curari vetans jussa post longiores epulas.”

person, day by day, in the forum of Augustus, in the portico of Livia, and other public places. But these occupations were soon interrupted by the report of fresh aggressions on the part of the Dacians, who began, Renewed aggressions of the Dacians. it seems, as soon as the conqueror's back was turned, to break the treaty in many ways, by collecting arms, receiving deserters, repairing their strongholds, soliciting alliances with neighbouring tribes, and making hostile incursions into the territories of the friends or clients of the empire. They ventured to cross the Theiss and attack their ancient enemies the Iazyges, on whom Trajan had forbidden them to make reprisals. Again the senate declared them public enemies, and exhorted the emperor to muster all the forces of the state, and reduce them to complete subjection.¹

In the spring of the year 104, Trajan repaired again to his army, cantoned along the course of the lower Danube, and held ready to be concentrated at his call on any point to which he chose to direct it. An Trajan's second expedition against the Dacians. unbroken line of military causeway, stretching from the Mayn across the Odenwald and Black Forest to the Danube, and from thence, closely hugging the right bank of the stream, to the shores of the Euxine, is ascribed to the care and prudence of this imperator, and was doubtless a work of many years' labour.² Trajan was the first apparently of the emperors who recognized the homogeneity of the barbarian races before him, foresaw the possibility of their union, and felt the importance of concentrating against them all the resources of the empire. The facilities afforded by these means of communication enabled him to pour the frontier legions on any threatened point, and even to spring on the foe where least prepared to resist him. Of this enormous work some traces may here and there be discovered; but the line is marked at the present day rather by names of posts and colonies founded along it, than by actual remains of

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 10.

² Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: "iter conditum per feras gentes, quo facile ab usque Pontico mari in Galliam permeatur."

turf or stone. At one spot, however, the gorge, namely, of the Danube just below Orsova, popularly known as the Iron Gate, the mark of Trajan's hand may be discovered in a scar which indents for some miles the face of the cliff, forming a terrace about five feet in width. We cannot believe that the way was actually so narrow, but additional width may have been gained by a wooden gallery, supported on a projecting framework.¹ The Roman legionary worked well with spade and pickaxe; nor, as may be seen on the Trajan column, was he less familiar with the use of the carpenter's tools; and the forests of Central Europe supplied him with abundant materials for the bridges, the palisades, the towers, and the roadways required for military purposes. The road which thus threaded the defile of the Iron Gate was probably completed before the commencement of the second expedition, and the emperor who had already secured the Banat, and the nearest pass into Transylvania, seems to have now contemplated a wider circuit, and an entrance into the heart of the enemy's country at a more distant point. Besides the Dacian Iron Gate already mentioned, which we must be careful not to confound with the Iron Gate of the Danube, there were two other passes further eastward, those of the Volcan and the Rothenthurm, leading out of Wallachia. The last and most distant of these defiles is that through which the waters of the Aluta descend into the Danube valley; and an ancient Roman road may be traced to it from the bank of the Danube. With this road the vestiges of an ancient bridge over the great river at Gieli may easily be connected; and at Gieli our antiquaries were wont to fix the spot where Trajan planted in the stream the vast and solid pile described by Dion. But this opinion

Remains of
bridges at Gieli
and at Severin.

² The construction of this road is described by Mr. Paget in his *Hungary and Transylvania*, ii. 123. It is ascertained to be the work of Trajan from an inscription on the cliff overhanging the road at a place called Ogradina. The inscription, slightly supplied by Arnett in a memoir (Wein, 1856), points to the year 101. (Trajan, trib. pot. iv. cons. iv.) while he was Germanicus, but not yet Dacicus: "montis et fluvii anfractibus superatis viam patefecit."

seems to be refuted by a modern discovery. A little below Orsova the Danube issues from the Iron Gate, and at a village called Severin, where it expands to a width of 1300 yards, the foundations of piers, corresponding in number with the statement of the historian, have been seen when the water was more than usually low. Here, then, as is now generally agreed, stood the bridge of Trajan's architect, Apollodorus.¹ The passage of the river at Severin would point to the Volcan, at the head of the Schyl, as the pass through which Trajan penetrated into Dacia; but in this direction, it seems, there are no vestiges of a Roman causeway, whereas such a road undoubtedly led from Gieli to the Rothenthurm by the line of the Aluta. The question does not appear to me satisfactorily settled; but the correspondence between the account of Dion and the existing indications of a bridge is tolerably close, and it would be perhaps excessive caution to withhold assent from the opinion now commonly received.²

Trajan's stone
bridge over the
Danube.

It seems to have been Trajan's policy to establish a permanent connexion between the opposite banks, so that the Roman forces might command a passage at all seasons without delay or impediment. The foundations he laid were enormous piles of masonry, capable of bearing the greatest weights, and resisting the utmost pressure of ice or water. The superstructure was probably of wood; for though I cannot believe the statement that the span of the arches was 170 Roman, or 163 English feet, the dimensions were undoubtedly such as would hardly admit of solid stonework.³ The vast preparations urged hastily for-

Dimensions of
Trajan's bridge.

¹ That the bridge was the work of Apollodorus, of whom more hereafter, is stated by Procopius, *Edif.* iv. 6.

² Francke, p. 128, 129., seems to show that Gieli, about 220 miles below Belgrade, 150 miles below Severin, answers to the conditions required in every respect, except its distance from the presumed base of Trajan's operations. There are remains there, also, of piers and towers, very similar to those at Severin.

³ Dion's measurements are 150 Roman feet for the height of the arches,

ward, for putting an effectual curb on their aggressions, alarmed the Dacians, and several tribes seem to have repeated their submission. Decebalus sought to avert the attack by another capitulation. But the demands of Trajan were now so severe and peremptory, that the barbarian was driven to despair, and making a last effort for independence, assembled all his vassals, and warned them that the defection of one must draw down ruin upon all, for the Romans were determined to complete their subjugation. The Dacian was brave and resolute; nor need we doubt that he was cunning also, and treacherous. The Romans asserted that he tried to repel the invasion by assassinating their commander. His emissary gained admission to the presence of the fearless and affable imperator, and drew a dagger upon him. Arrested and put to the torture, he divulged the treachery of his master. Decebalus then resorted to another device. He

Device of Decebalus to obtain favourable terms.

entrapped Longinus, a distinguished Roman officer, and required him to disclose the plans of his imperator. The Roman gallantly refused; and Decebalus had the magnanimity to respect his courage, and to release him from his bonds. He retained him, however, as a hostage, and demanded honourable terms of peace for his ransom. The Romans, indeed, pretended that he insisted on the evacuation of the Dacian soil to the banks of the Danube, together with an indemnity for the expenses of the war. Whatever were the terms really proposed, Trajan, much as he valued his officer, could not assent to them. Nothing but the overthrow of Decebalus, and the thorough conquest of his whole realm, would now satisfy him. He returned, however, an evasive answer, by which he deterred the enemy from slaying his prisoner.

Gallantry of Longinus.

170 for the span, and 4770 for the entire length of the structure. The Roman foot is to the English as 11.5 to 12. Paget's estimate of 3900 feet for the length would be more than 500 feet short of Dion's. The height, according to Dion's statement, seems to me incredible. He was himself governor of Panonia about 120 years later, but the bridge had been overthrown long before. The piers, of course, were of stone, but the superstructure must have been of wood, which, indeed, is borne out by the sculptures of the Trajan column.

Longinus, sensible of the difficulty in which his leader was involved, determined to relieve him by his own voluntary death. Pretending to concert a reconciliation between the two chiefs, he sent a freedman to Trajan, with a secret message, conjuring him to prosecute the war with unflinching vigour. Meanwhile he had got possession of some poison, which, as soon as the messenger left him, he swallowed. When Decebalus discovered that he had been cajoled, he demanded the surrender of the freedman, offering to return the dead body in exchange; but Trajan magnanimously refused to barter the living for the dead, and the Dacian's revenge was frustrated.¹

While the bridge was building Trajan was preparing the plan of his campaign, collecting his forces and magazines, and negotiating with the neighbouring tribes. He crossed the Danube with an overwhelming force, and extended his operations over a large tract of country, constructing roads and planting

Defeat of the
Dacians, and
death of Dece-
balus,
A. D. 106.

fortifications, to form a secure basis for the complete reduction of the Dacian strongholds. He seems to have struck eastward, as far at least as the Schyl or Aluta, and thence to have ascended to the Rothenthurm, from which he burst with irresistible fury on the valley of the Maros. Decebalus was wholly unable to contend with him in the field, but still maintained an obstinate but aimless and ineffectual defence behind the streams, or among the defiles of the mountains, till he was finally driven into the heart of Transylvania. Such a campaign may have exercised the skill of the Roman general and his officers, and given scope to the display of personal valour and conduct in his soldiers; but it was distinguished by no glorious exploits of arms, and the poem which Pliny urges his friend Caninius to consecrate to it, must have been overlaid with heavy descriptions of mechanical operations, or have evaporated in a cloud of dull panegyrics, but for the devotion of Longinus and other feats of

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 12.

personal heroism, such as were never wanting in the Roman armies.¹ Trajan's final success was indeed secured by the defection of the Sarmatians, the Iazyges, and the Burri, from the common cause of the barbarians. All the passes were now in the hands of the Romans, and the central regions fell step by step into their possession. The hill fort, in which the Dacian chieftain held his residence, was stormed after a desperate resistance, and Decebalus fell on his own sword amidst the ruins of his capital. The nobles of the conquered land followed the example of their sovereign, first firing their houses, and then handing round the poisoned bowl. Such is the scene represented on the column at Rome, which still records in monumental sculpture the chief features of this memorable struggle. The head of Decebalus was sent as a trophy to Rome, a downward step towards barbarism, which marks the coarseness of feeling engendered in the frontier camps of civilization. Decebalus had concealed his treasures under a heap of stones in the bed of a river, the stream of which had been first turned, and then suffered to flow again over it.² The captives employed in the work had been put to death to prevent its disclosure. Nevertheless the secret had been revealed to Trajan, and the precious hoards thus recovered sufficed to reward the valour of the veterans, to defray the expenses of the war, and to perpetuate the memory of the achievement by the column erected in a new forum at Rome.³

¹ Pliny, *Epist.* viii. 1. : "quæ tam recens, tam copiosa, tam lata, quæ denique tam poetica et, quanquam in verissimis rebus, tam fabulosa materia?" The delineation of the bridge on the Trajan column is followed by that of sieges and skirmishes, rather than of regular battles.

² Dion, lxxviii. 14., calls this river the Sargetia (the Strehl), on which Zermizegethusa or Varhely stood. But this valley had been acquired in the first campaign, and the spot where the treasures were concealed might be expected to be more remote.

³ A part of Trajan's spoil was dedicated to Jupiter Casius. Suidas : Κάσιος Ζεὺς ἐνθα Τραιανὸς ἀνέθηκε κρατῆρας ἀργυροῦς, ἀκροθίνια τῆς κατὰ τῶν Γετῶν νίκης. Hadrian furnished the votive inscription : Ζηνὶ τόδ' Αἰνεάδης Κασίῳ Τραιανὸς ἀγαλμα. The second war ended in 106. "Trajan, imp. v. cons. v." See the medals.

The resistance of the Dacians, broken, abandoned, and already more than half subdued, ceased with the death of their chief. Trajan had determined to add another wide province to the empire. A long period of restless aggressions, checked occasionally and chastised with bloody severity, followed by four years of war carried on in the heart of the country with all the barbarity of a ruder age and all the means and resources of the imperial civilization, had exhausted, and, as it would seem, nearly depopulated the whole of Dacia. The emperor invited settlers from all parts of his dominions, and repeopled the land with so many Roman colonists,—with colonists at least of Latin race and speech,—that the language of the empire became, and to this day substantially remains, the national tongue of the inhabitants.¹ The possession of the territory was secured by the foundation of four colonies at Zermizegethusa, Apulum, Napuca, and Cerna.² The extent of the new province, which was bounded by the Danube on the south, by the Theiss on the west, by the Carpathians on the north, was not perhaps accurately determined amid the boundless steppes in which it lost itself eastward. Ptolemy indeed makes the Hierassus, or Pruth, the eastern frontier; but Roman plantations, and possibly military stations, also reached even to the Dniester,

Dacia reduced
to the form of a
province.

¹ Eutrop. viii. 3.: “ex toto orbe Rom. infinitas eo copias hominum translulerat, ad agros et urbes colendas. Dacia enim diuturno bello Decebalis viris fuerat exhausta.” Trajan introduced the novel principle of forbidding the transplantation of citizens from Italy; but whether before or after the foundation of his own colonies in Dacia does not appear. Capitolinus speaks of a later emperor who violated this rule (*M. Aurel.* 11.): “Hispaniis exhaustis, Italica allectione, contra Trajani precepta, verecunde consuluit.”

² The first of these was officially designated Col. Ulpia Trajana, and may be traced, from inscriptions and other remains, at Varhely. Apulum (Col. Apulensis, Ulpian. *Dig.* xv. 8.) is supposed to be Karlsburg in the upper valley of the Maros. Napuca is identified by the distances in the Peutinger Table with Maros-Vasarhely. (Francke, p. 173.) Cerna or Dierna (Ptolem. iii. 8. 10.) is mentioned as a colony of Trajan by Ulpian, l. c. It seems to have stood on the little stream which bears the name of Tjerna, and to have been at or near to Mehadia, long celebrated for its saline baths.

and some critics have imagined that the Roman occupation was propagated as far as the Don.¹ The narrow strip between the Theiss and the Danube, from which the Dacian tribes had been expelled by the people known as the Iazyges Metanastæ, seems, strange as it may appear, to have been never included in any Roman province.² It was no doubt a tract of mere swamp and jungle. The triple division of the Dacian province into Ripensis, Apulensis, and Alpenensis, refers to the three districts of Wallachia, the Banat with Transylvania, and the upper valley of the Theiss, or the hill country from which that stream descends. Mœsia now ceased to be a frontier province; the great road which led into the mountains along the banks of the Aluta conveyed the presidary legions from the stations they had so long occupied on the Danube to the heart of Transylvania. Nevertheless Mœsia might still retain its importance, as a base of operations, if force should ever be required to retain the conquered Dacians in subjection, and Trajan took further measures to secure it by the establishment within it of the two colonies of Œscus and Ratiaria on the river-bank.³ He built also the town of Nicopolis, named after his victories, in a strong position on the slopes of the Hæmus. To him and his lieutenants are ascribed the vestiges of Roman causeways, and of ramparts and trenches long supposed to be Roman, with which the lowlands of Wallachia and the Banat are still deeply scarred; but the last at least, whether their date precede or follow the Roman occupation, are now generally considered to be the works of the barbarians.

¹ Francke, p. 180.

² The geography of Dacia is known chiefly from a chapter in Ptolemy (iii. 8.), to which a few notices may be added from the Augustan Histories and the inscriptions. See Francke's *Gesch. Trajans*, and Marquardt (*Becker's Handb. der Alterth.* iii. 1. 108.).

³ Ratiaria is placed at or near to Widdin. Œscus lay considerably further east. Trajan's Nicopolis (*Νικόπολις περὶ Αἰμον*, Ptol.) mentioned by Amm. Marcell. xxxi. 5. 16. and placed by Jornandes on the Iatra (mod. Iantra), is not to be confounded with the modern Nicopolis or Nikup, on the Danube. See Francke, p. 160.

Of the Dacian province, the last acquired and the first to be surrendered of the Roman possessions, if we except some transient occupations, soon to be commemorated, in the East, not many traces now exist ; but even these may suffice to mark the moulding

The monuments of the Dacian conquest.

power of Roman civilization, which impressed on this distant region the same type of culture which we recognise in Spain and Britain, in Africa and Asia. The conquests of Trajan are indelibly engraved on coins and marbles, while the accents of the old Roman tongue still echo in the valleys of Hungary and Wallachia ; the descendants of the Dacians at the present day repudiate the appellation of Wallachs, or strangers, and still claim the name of Romûni. Interesting, however, as these records are of a conquest which left such slight and transient political traces, the wars of Dacia are eminently distinguished by their sculptured monument, still standing in its pristine majesty, and embalmed in the glory of nearly eighteen centuries, the column of Trajan at Rome. After his return to Rome, and the celebration of

Trajan's forum.

a triumph, with spectacles on a grander scale than ever, the conqueror of Dacia resolved to immortalize the memory of his epoch, by the construction of a forum which should surpass in extent and splendour every similar work of the Cæsars before him.¹ The emperors from Julius downwards, had contributed towards opening an outlet for the traffic of the old Roman forum into the Campus Martius, to the right of the Capitoline. But this eminence, which now stands out disconnected from the encircling ridge of the Roman hills, was, down to this period, no more than a bold projecting spur of the Quirinal, and the slope which united the one with the other formed a barrier to the advance of the imperial builders. The splendours of the city, and the splendours of the Campus beyond it, were still separated by a narrow isthmus, thronged perhaps with the squalid cabins

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 15., specifies the number of days of these spectacles, viz., 123 ; the number of beasts slain, viz., 11,000 ; the number of gladiators who fought, viz., 10,000. This triumph was celebrated A. D. 107, A. U. 860.

of the poor, and surmounted by the remains of the Servian wall which ran along its summit.¹ Step by step the earlier emperors had approached with their new forums to the foot of this obstruction. Domitian was the first to contemplate and commence its removal.² Nerva had the fortune to consecrate and to give his own name to a portion of his predecessor's construction;³ but Trajan undertook to complete the bold design, and the genius of his architect triumphed over all obstacles, and executed a work which exceeded in extent and splendour any previous achievement of the kind. He swept away every building on the site, levelled the spot on which they had stood, and laid out a vast area of columnar galleries connecting halls and chambers for public use and recreation. The new forum was adorned with two libraries, one for Greek, the other for Roman volumes, and it was bounded on the west by a basilica of magnificent dimensions. Beyond this basilica, and within the limits of the Campus, the same architect erected a temple for the worship of Trajan himself; but this work belonged probably to the reign of Trajan's successor, and no doubt the Ulpian forum, with all its adjuncts, occupied many years in building.⁴ The area was adorned with numerous

Libraries, basilica and temple.

¹ The fact of this connection between the Quirinal and the Capitoline seems to be put beyond a doubt by the inscription on the base of the Trajan column, which purports to have been erected to show how deep was the excavation made for the area of the forum: "ad declarandum quantæ altitudinis mons et locus tantis operibus sit egestus." This statement is confirmed by the words of Dion, lxxviii. 16.: ἐς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἔργου· πάντος γὰρ τοῦ χωρίου ἐκείνου ὀρεινοῦ ὄντος, κατέσκαψε τοσοῦτον ὅσον ὁ κίων ἀνίσχει, καὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐκ τούτου πεδινὴν κατεσκεύασε; but it seems quite inexplicable.

² Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: "adhuc Romæ a Domitiano cæpta fora, atque alia multa plusquam magnifica coluit ornavitque."

³ Suet. *Domit.* 5.: "forum, quod nunc Nervæ vocatur." This forum was also called *Transitorium* or *Pervium*; it seems undoubtedly to have been begun by Domitian, or, rather, by Vespasian, and to have been adorned with Domitian's temple of Minerva; hence "*Palladium* forum."

⁴ Apollodorus is specified as the architect by Dion, lxi. 4. The authorities for the description of the forum, &c., are numerous, and have been collected by the topographers. See Becker, p. 378, foll. It is most improbable that

statues, in which the figure of Trajan was frequently repeated, and among its decorations were groups in bronze or marble representing his most illustrious actions. The balustrades and cornices of the whole mass of buildings flamed with gilded images of arms and horses. Here stood the great equestrian statue of the emperor; here was the triumphal arch decreed him by the senate, adorned with sculpture, which Constantine, two centuries later, transferred without a blush to his own, a barbarous act of the first Christian emperor, to which however we probably owe their preservation to this day from still more barbarous spoliation.¹

Amidst this profusion of splendour, the great object to which the eye was principally directed was the column, which rose majestically in the centre of the forum to the height of 128 feet, sculptured from the base Trajan's column. of the shaft to the summit with the story of the Dacian wars, shining in every volute and moulding with gold and pigments, and crowned with the colossal effigy of the august conqueror.² The Greek and Roman artists had long felt the want of some device for breaking the horizontal lines so prevalent in their architecture; and to this feeling we may perhaps attribute the erection of the Egyptian obelisks, by Augustus and others, in the public places of Rome. The

the temple of Trajan should have been erected during his lifetime, and the place it occupied beyond the basilica seems to show that it was a later addition. Trajan's triumphal arch was completed or decorated by Hadrian, as appears from a figure of Hadrian's favourite Antinous on one of the medallions which have been transferred from it to the arch of Constantine. Müller, *Denkmaler der Alten Kunst*, p. 51.

¹ The subjects of these bas-reliefs show that they belonged to Trajan's arch. The arch of Constantine may have been preserved in ages of Christian barbarism by respect for the memory of the great Christian emperor. Vopiscus (in *Prob.* 2.) speaks of the books of Trajan's libraries as removed to the baths of Diocletian, a dangerous locality for such combustible articles. But we gather from Sidonius Apollinaris that they still occupied their original place in the fifth century.

² The column is referred to in Gell. xiii. 24.; Pausan. v. 12. 6.; Amm. Marcell. xvi. 11. See the topographers, &c. For the fact that it was coloured, see Francke, *Gesch. Traj.* p. 188.

Greeks seem to have often used the column for this purpose;¹ but a column, the emblem of supporting power, with nothing to rest upon it, however graceful in itself, must have seemed to lack meaning, which the urn or ball by which it was sometimes surmounted would hardly supply. But the statue of a god or a hero imparted at least a moral dignity to the pillar, on which it might seem to have alighted on its flight from heaven to earth, or from earth to heaven. The proportions of the Trajan column are peculiarly graceful; the compact masses of stone, nineteen in number, of which the whole shaft is composed, may lead us to admire the skill employed in its construction; but the most interesting feature of this historic monument is the spiral band of figures which throughout encircles it.² To the subjects of Trajan himself this record of his exploits in bold relief must have given a vivid and sufficient idea of the people, the places, and the actions indicated; even to us, after so many centuries, they furnish a correct type of the arms, the arts, and the costume both of the Romans and barbarians, which we should vainly seek for elsewhere. The Trajan column forms a notable chapter in the pictorial history of Rome.

Nor was the conquest of Dacia the only triumph of the Roman arms under the auspices of a soldier-emperor. At the same moment, while Trajan was advancing the frontiers in the north, his lieutenant Cornelius Palma, the governor of Syria, was annexing a new district to the great proconsulate of the east. The ill-defined frontier from Damascus to the Red Sea was always subject to attack from the petty half-nomade chiefs, who flitted from tent to village along the border of the Arabian desert. The principal stations of the tribes who caused this constant annoyance were at Gerasa, Bostra, Philadelphia, and

Acquisitions of
Cornelius Pal-
ma in Arabia.

¹ The fashion of placing statues on columns was adopted from the Greeks. See Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 6.

² The statue of Trajan had long fallen from its lofty pedestal when it was replaced with a figure of St. Peter by Pope Sixtus V. Beneath the column was a sepulchral chamber, designed for the ashes of the emperor.

Petra, and it was necessary to protect the eastern slopes of the Jordan valley by the complete reduction of these places.¹ A single campaign, conducted with energy and determination, sufficed perhaps to lodge the Roman eagles in these border citadels, from whence the country could be kept in permanent subjection. The great caravan lines between the Euphrates and the Red Sea were secured. The emporiums of Arabian commerce were placed under the authority of Roman governors, and enjoyed for some centuries the protection of Roman garrisons. Among them Petra rose to peculiar eminence, and the remarkable ruins still existing on its site attest at least the extent of its population and the splendour of its architecture. This district, which was one of the latest of the Roman acquisitions, continued to be attached to the empire for several succeeding centuries.²

The ideas of the great conquering people were still dilating with the swelling consciousness of their power and magnificence. The vast dimensions of Trajan's architectural erection might put to blush the imperial builders of earlier times. The Ulpian forum, with all its accessories, occupied a larger space than those of Julius, Augustus, and Nerva together; while the open area of the old Roman forum might have been contained within the precincts of the Ulpian basilica

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 14., whose epitomator dismisses the subject in a single sentence. Ammian. Marcell. xiv. 8.: "hæc quoque civitates habet inter oppida quædam ingentes, Bostram et Gerasam et Philadelphiam. Hanc, provincie imposito nomine, rectoreque, attributo, obtemperare legibus nostris Trajanus compulit imperator." Damascus, hitherto subjected nominally to the rule of a native family, which bore the name of Aretas, and resided in Petra (Joseph. *Antiq.* xiii. 15. 2.; S. Paul, 2 *Cor.* xi. 32.), though occupied by a Roman garrison (Joseph. *Antiq.* xiv. 11. 7.), was now formally incorporated in the Syrian province. Becker, *Handb. der Alterthümer*, iii. 1. 183. Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* iii. p. 330.

² Dion, lxxv. 1. 2.; Eutrop. viii. 18. See also the *Notitia dign.* (Becker, *Alterthümer*, iii. 1. 203.) The people of Petra and Bostra accepted the date of the Roman conquest for their chronological era. *Chron. Pasch.* i. p. 472.: Περραιοὶ καὶ Βοστρηνοὶ ἐντέθεν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν χρόνοις ἀριθμοῖσι, i. e. from A. D. 105.

alone.¹ It is much to be regretted that no account of it, and indeed no reference to it, is given by a contemporary author. But Martial, who has supplied us with many hints, at least of the architectual glories of Nero and Domitian, had retired to his native Bilbilis before the commencement of the works in which the grandiosity of Spanish taste was first exemplified in marble; the panegyric of Pliny had been already pronounced, and the letters comprised in his collection belong to an earlier date.² Juvenal, who is not wholly silent on other buildings of Trajan, has no allusion to the forum or the column; and indeed this writer, while he describes life at Rome in almost every line of almost all his satires, is strangely deficient in topographical notices. Tacitus reserved a work on the *Affairs of Trajan* for the solace of an old age which possibly he never attained. Since the fall of Domitian, Suetonius has deserted us, and the era at which we are now arrived stands on the verge of a great chasm in Roman literature. At a much later period we get occasional glimpses of the Ulpian forum, which seems to have long retained its paramount dignity among the remains of ancient magnificence. It was here that the emperors long sate in state, attended by the lictors with their gilded fasces; and here, in the last decline or revival of old traditions, when there were no longer emperors at Rome, the consuls continued to create new Quirites by manumission on the kalends of January.³ When the second of the Christian

Few remaining
notices of the
Ulpian forum.

¹ See the ichnography of this series of buildings in Becker's *Handbuch*, taken from Canina's *Indicazione Topografica*, and adopted in the art. "Roma;" Smith's *Dict. of Class. Geography*.

² The date of the dedication of the Trajan column is inscribed on its base, and answers to the 17th year of his reign, A. D. 114. The latest of Pliny's letters that can be dated belongs to the year 107, but the period of his death is unknown.

³ Claudian, xxviii. 646.:

"desuetaque cingit
Regius auratis fora fascibus Ulpia lictor."

Sidon Apoll.:

"ad Ulpia poscunt
To fora donabis quos libertate Quirites."

and Byzantine Cæsars visited the abandoned capital, he was struck with the glories of this spot, which even then had no rival in splendour under heaven.¹ Even its decorations seem to have been singularly respected. Five hundred years after the Dacian triumph, when Rome had been taken and retaken by Goths, Lombards, and Greeks, and had suffered from earthquakes and inundations, from natural decay and squalid poverty, more than even from the violence of the spoiler, a legend, which seems not wholly groundless, relates how Pope Gregory the Great, traversing the forum of Trajan, was struck with the sight of a group in bronze, one of the many works still conspicuous on the spot, in which a generous action of its imperial founder was vividly represented.²

The Ulpian forum, however, though the largest and the most interesting, was by no means the only construction of this emperor at Rome. No reign perhaps was marked by more extensive alterations and additions to the existing features of the city. Trajan prolonged the series of halls and porticos which decorated the Campus Martius, among which the Pantheon and the Julian mausoleum still rose preëminent in grandeur. He constructed a theatre in the same quarter, which was remarkable from its circular shape; he added another gymnasium and another odeum to the places of the kind already existing, consecrated to the display of Grecian arts and accomplishments; he gave to the people new thermæ, the site

Other buildings
of Trajan in
the city.

¹ See the account of the visit of Constantius in Ammianus, xvi. 6. : "cum ad Trajani forum venisset, singularem sub omni cælo structuram." Cassiodor. *Variar.* vii. 6. ; Victor, *de Region.* viii.

² The incident is related by the biographers of Gregory, John and Paul Diaconus, and by John of Salisbury, *De curial. magis.* v. 8. The group represented Trajan dismounting to listen to a female petitioner, who would not be put off with a distant promise of an audience when he should return from the wars. The Pontiff, it is added, prayed for the soul of the righteous heathen, and received an assurance that Trajan's soul should be released from Purgatory. Comp. Dante, *Purgat.* x. 73. ; *Parad.* xx. 40. As regards the female petitioner, Dion, it may be observed, tells the story of Hadrian, *lxi.* 6.

of which was near to those of Titus, if indeed they were not actually an extension of the Flavian edifice.' He brought the waters of the lake Sabatinus to the Janiculus, thus adding a tenth to the nine existing aqueducts of the city.² There seems ground for supposing that he completed the arch of Titus, still unfinished, on the Velia. The Circus Maximus had been arranged by Julius Cæsar for the reception of the whole Roman people, with a lower story of masonry, and wooden galleries above. The wood-work had been swept away by Nero's fire; the restoration of this favourite resort had been conducted by succeeding emperors; but Trajan earned popularity by enlarging its accommodation, whereby room was obtained for the still increasing multitude of the citizens.³ While, however, the magnificent emperor was intent on raising the abode of the Romans to the level of their fortunes, inundations and earthquakes, the most ancient and inveterate of her foes, were making havoc of many of her noblest buildings; the fragments still remaining of Nero's brilliant palace were consumed by fire, the Pantheon was stricken by lightning, and the calamities which befell the mistress of the world might point a moral for a Christian writer of a much later date, who ascribed them to the judgment of God on a persecutor of his holy religion.⁴

Of this hereafter. The princely prodigality of Trajan's taste was defrayed by the plunder or tribute of conquered enemies, and seems to have laid at least no extraordinary burdens on his subjects. His rage for building had the further merit of being directed for the most part to works of public interest and utility. He

Trajan's architectural works in the provinces.

¹ Pausan. l. c.

² Becker's *Alterthümer*, i. p. 706.

³ Plin. *Paneg.* 51. Comp. Dion, lxxviii. 7. The text of Pliny makes the additional seats only 5000, which seems absurd. Cæsar made room for 260,000, and at a later period we read of 385,000 or even 485,000 spectators. Possibly all these numbers are corrupt.

⁴ Orosius, vii. 12. To guard against these disasters Trajan limited the height of private dwellings to sixty feet, or ten feet below the maximum allowed by Augustus. Victor, *Epit.* 18.

built for the gods, the senate, and the people, not for himself; he restored the temples, enlarged the halls and places of public resort; but he was content himself with the palaces of his predecessors.¹ Not in Rome only, but in innumerable places throughout Italy and the provinces, the hand of Trajan was conspicuous in the structures he executed, some of which still attest the splendour of the epoch, and the large-minded patriotism of their author. An arch at Ancona still reminds us that here he constructed a haven for his navy on the upper sea; and the port of Civita Vecchia is still sheltered by the mole he cast into the waters to defend the roadstead of Centumcellæ.² The bridge over the Tagus at Alcantara affirms, by an inscription still legible upon it, that it was built by Julius Lacer, one of Trajan's favourite architects, though the cost was defrayed, according to the same interesting record, by the local contributions of some rich and spirited communities.³ A writer three centuries later declares of Trajan that he *built the world over*; and the wide diffusion and long continuance of his fame, beyond that of so many others of the imperial series, may be partly attributed to the constant recurrence of his name conspicuously inscribed on the most solid and best known monuments of the empire.⁴ The greatest of his suc-

¹ Pliny even praises Trajan for his great moderation in building, at least within the walls of Rome: "idem tam parvus in ædificando quam diligens in tuendo." *Paneg.* 51.—But the *Panegyricus*, it must be remembered, refers only to the commencement of the reign.

² Pliny, *Epist.* vi. 31., describes the port of Centumcellæ. Comp. coins in Eckhel, inscriptions in Gruter, &c. To this, according to the scholiast, Juvenal alludes, xii. 75.:

"Tandem intrat positas inclusa per æquora moles,
Tyrrenamque Pharon, porrectaque brachia rursus."

³ Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 584., after Gruter and others. The dimensions of this work, as given by Brotier, are: height 200 feet, length 670, width 28; arches 6, each of 80 feet span: all, of course, in French measure. Trajan erected bridges also over the Rhine, the Euphrates, and the Tigris.

⁴ Eutrop. viii. 2.: "orbem terrarum ædificans." Several coins of families, e. g., Æmilia, Cassia, Cornelia and others, attest the restoration by Trajan of temples and basilicas erected by the great men of the republic. See Brotier's Tacitus: in append. chronol. A. U. C. 856.

cessors, the illustrious Constantine, full of admiration for his genius, and touched perhaps with some envy of his glory, compared him pleasantly to a wallflower, which clings for support to the stones on which it flourishes so luxuriantly.¹

The care of this wise and liberal ruler extended from the harbours, aqueducts, and bridges, to the general repair of the highways of the empire. Nor was it only as the restorer of military discipline or the reviver of the old tradition of conquest, that he took in charge the communications which were originally designed chiefly for military purposes.² He was the great improver, though not the inventor, of the system of posts upon the chief roads, which formed a striking feature of Roman civilization as an instrument for combining the remotest provinces under a centralized administration.³ The extent to which the domestic concerns of every distant municipium were subjected to the prince's supervision is curiously portrayed in the letters of Pliny, who appears, as governor of Bithynia, to have felt it incumbent on him to consult his master on the answer he should return to every petition of the provincials, whether they wanted to construct an aqueduct, to erect a gymnasium, or to cover a common sewer.⁴ It is possible indeed that the courtly prefect may,

Trajan's vigilance in the administration of the provinces.

¹ Victor, *Epit.* 60. : "hic (Constantinus) Trajanum herbam parieariam, ob titulos multis sedibus inscriptos appellare solitus erat."

² The roads constructed or repaired by Trajan are carefully enumerated by Francke, pp. 577-583. ; i. e. 1. on the northern side of Italy between Auximum and Aquileja ; 2. the Appian Way ; 3. from Beneventum to Brundisium ; 4. various roads in Spain. They are for the most part ascertained from inscriptions.

³ Victor, *Cæs.* 13. : "noscendis ocyus quæ ubique e republica gerebantur admota media publici cursus." Comp. Plin. *Epist.* x. 54, 55. The system had been originally set up by Augustus (Suet. *Octav.* 49.), as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter. The minute economy of its administration appears in divers letters of Pliny to Trajan, in which he excuses himself for what might be considered an illegitimate use of it, x. 30, 31, 121, 122. ed. Gierig.

⁴ Plin. *Epist.* x. 21. 22. 47. 48. 57. 61. 70-73. 98. 99. (ed. Gierig). We

in this instance, have been over obsequious, and Trajan himself seems almost to resent the importunity with which he begs to have an architect sent him from Rome. *Are there no such artists in your province or elsewhere?* asks the emperor. *It is from Greece that the architects come to Rome, and Greece is nearer to you than Italy.*¹ These works, whether of convenience or splendour, were, it seems, generally constructed by the governing bodies in the provinces themselves, and by local taxation, though assisted not uncommonly by imperial munificence. Wealthy citizens might continue, as of old, thus to gratify their own vanity, taste or generosity, of which Pliny is himself an example; but the days of the splendid magnates, who pretended to rival the prince in their lavish expenditure, had passed away, and it was upon the master of the empire and proprietor of the fiscus, that the burden continued more and more to fall.²

While the chief functionaries of the state subsided into mere agents of police, the senate itself, even under the most

may be surprised at the minuteness of the supervision exercised by the central government, as exemplified in these records. This was, however, no novelty in the Roman administration, which under the free state was at least equally jealous and exacting. See an anecdote in Vitruvius, i. 4.: "in Apulia oppidum Salpia vetus . . . ex quo incolæ quotannis ægrotando laborantes aliquando pervenerunt ad M. Hostilium, eoque publice petentes impetraverunt, uti his idoneum locum ad mœnia transferenda conquereret, eligeretque. Tunc is moratus non est, sed statim, rationibus doctissime quasitis, secundum mare mercatus est possessionem loco salubri: ab senatuque pop. que Rôm. petiit ut sineret transferre oppidum," &c.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* x. 33, 34. Whether an architect was to be sought for from Greece or Rome, it shows how small the class of intelligent artists must have been throughout the empire, that a province like Bithynia, which contained such great cities as Nicæa and Nicomedia, was obliged to look so far for an architect. See the remarks of Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son Siècle*, i. 564.

² Pliny's munificence was on a small scale, as befitted the modest position of an advocate and a man of letters. See an instance in *Ep.* iv. 1. Licinius Sura, a wealthy and ambitious noble, built a gymnasium for the Roman people. A small part only of the liberality of Herodes Atticus, of whom more hereafter, was bestowed on the Romans. Dion, lxxviii. 15.

obliging of its princes, abdicated its duties, and left to him the initiative in every work of public interest. The emperor had become the sole legislator, the sole administrator, the sole overseer of the commonwealth, and at last he found himself almost its sole benefactor also. A mere selfish voluptuary might neglect or repudiate this duty, but a prince of sense and honour acknowledged the obligation of providing, from the resources placed in his hands, for every object of general utility. The endowment of the professors of learning by Vespasian seems to have been made from the fisc. Domitian, in the midst of his necessities, had respected this allocation of the imperial treasures; but his own liberality was probably confined to establishing the paltry prizes of his Capitoline and Alban games. The ordinary largesses of grain by which the citizen of the lower ranks was almost wholly supported, had been extended by Augustus to infants, and the munificence of successive governments had added, from time to time, the condiments of wine, oil, and bacon to the produce of the Egyptian wheatfields; but Nerva seems to have first introduced the habit of providing a special endowment in money for the children of the poor, and more particularly for orphans. This prince's charity was casual and imperfect. It was reserved for Trajan to expand it into a system, and establish it as an imperial institution. Of the origin of this *alimentation* there is no trace. We can only imagine the motive for it in the anxiety so long manifested by government for the increase of the free population, and its wish to encourage legitimate wedlock.¹ The provision itself is recorded on many coins of Trajan and his successors, and is mentioned generally by the historians; but it is from the inscribed tablet of Veleia that we derive our full knowledge of its extent and character.² If we may venture to apply to Rome

Trajan's economical measures.

Alimentation of children.

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 28.: "III subsidium bellorum, ornamentum pacis, publicis sumptibus aluntur . . . ex his castra, ex his tribus replebantur."

² For the coins and inscriptions see Eckhel and Gruter. The tablet referred

and to Italy generally the data thus acquired with regard to one obscure municipium, it would seem that there was a graduated scale of endowment for male and female children, for legitimate and illegitimate, sufficient for their entire maintenance, and that the whole number of recipients throughout the peninsula might amount to 300,000.¹ This provision was continued up to the eighteenth year for males, and to the fourteenth for females. The number of boys thus supported would seem to have been ten times that of girls; and though the care of the government might naturally be directed to the one sex more than to the other, the disproportion seems, nevertheless, to point significantly to the fact, of which we have had other indications, of the frequent abandonment of female children.² The sums by which this system was maintained were advanced doubtless by the fiscus. Loans were made to the local proprietors for the cultivation or improvement of their estates, at the reduced rate of five per cent., instead of the twelve per cent., which was ordinarily demanded.³ The tablet of Veleia specifies the

to is an inscribed plate of bronze, found in the neighbourhood of Placentia in the year 1747, from which the character of the institution has been deduced by the learning and ingenuity of Muratori, Maffei, Gori and Terrasson.

¹ Such is the calculation of Francke (*Gesch. Trajans*, p. 413.) on the assumption that the number relieved, and the scale of relief at Veleia (including Placentia and Liburna), may be taken as an index to the whole of Italy. But for this we have not sufficient warrant. On the contrary, we might perhaps infer that the munificence of Trajan was local rather than universal, from the fact that Pliny undertakes to establish a fund for the relief of his own townspeople at Comum: *Epist.* vii. 18. In his *Panegyric* (cap. 28.) Pliny specifies the number of 5000 infants whom Trajan had thus endowed, but possibly in Rome only; but this refers to an early period in his reign.

² It was the practice of a special class of dealers to rear children deserted by their parents, in order to sell them as slaves. The trade was recognized and regulated by law, and many intricate questions arose from the claims of the parents to their children in after life, See Pliny, *Epist.* x. 74, 75. Such children were called "altelli."

³ Such is the explanation of Hegewisch and his translator Solvet (*Epoque la plus heureuse*, &c.), followed by Francke, and apparently the true one. Comp. Dion, lxxviii. 5.: ὥς καὶ ταῖς πόλεσι ταῖς ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ πρὸς τὴν τῶν παίδων τροφὴν

names of forty-six such proprietors, with the sums borrowed by each, and the security in land they offered for them. If we may further believe that the emperor engaged not to call in the principal, the liberality of the government would amount to the final surrender of a large capital, on the receipt of less than half the returns that might have been fairly exacted for it. The sum thus raised annually in the little town of Veleia might amount to about 400*l.* of our money, which was not insufficient for the maintenance of 300 poor children;¹ but if the above explanation of the transaction be correct, it would seem that the landowners who were accommodated on such easy terms, were gainers by the imperial benevolence no less than the children themselves. The system, whatever was its real character, took firm root, and was carried further by the endowments of later rulers. We must regard it, on the whole, as an indirect attempt to make the provinces, by which the fiscus was supplied, contribute to the support of Italy. Of the various modes by which this end had been sought, the alimention of Trajan was the most specious; but it was not less really the exaction of a tribute, such as Italy, in her days of conquest, had been wont to demand openly; but in those days she gave at least her own blood in exchange for the gold of the provincials; now she had ceased even to recruit the legions.

The legislation, indeed, of this popular emperor is marked generally by a special consideration for Italian interests; and this circumstance is to be borne in mind, when we remark the acclamations with which he was greeted by Pliny, the mouth-piece of the nobility, and the favour in which he was held by the later generations,

Measures for
the special ben-
efit of Italy.

πολλὰ χάρισσαι, καὶ τοῦτοις ἐνεργετῶν. That the endowment was derived, not from a tax on the proprietors, but in a certain sense from the imperial treasury, appears from Pliny's phrase "alimenta de tuo;" and this may be reconciled with the "publico sumptu" of the inscriptions by reference to the fiscus, the private treasure of the emperor derived from public sources.

¹ See Francke's calculations, p. 412.; on the supposition that specie was worth ten times its present value.

who referred no doubt to the testimony of this class only. Even Trajan's wide experience, his acquaintance and personal connexion with the provinces, failed in expanding his views to the conception of himself as sovereign of the whole empire. He was still the emperor of the Romans, perhaps, in this sense, the last emperor of the Romans. While the world was rapidly assimilating itself to a single type, and imbibing the idea of its common interests, he fixed his mind on the narrow notions of the past, and tried to perpetuate the selfish principle of monopoly and conquest. His meagre and futile attempts, indeed, to maintain the old Italian or Roman policy, show how vain was now the endeavour to prop the prosperity of one section of the empire by the sacrifice of the rest, even though that section was the sacred soil of Italy herself. The attempt to attach the wealth of the world to a single spot, by requiring the candidates for public office to hold one third of their landed property in Italy, was a futile recurrence to obsolete notions unsuited to the genius of the times.¹ The relaxations Trajan introduced into the tax on successions, to which, since the time of Augustus, the Romans had fully reconciled themselves, were designed as an encouragement to undertake citizenship, a boon which was felt at this period to be of doubtful value, but about which, as a military ruler, he was doubly anxious. The measures by which he secured a constant supply of grain from the provinces, exempting its exportation from all duties, and stimulating the growers at one extremity of the empire to relieve the deficiencies of another, were directed to the maintenance of abundance in Rome and Italy. Thus on the casual failure of the harvest in Egypt, her empty grana-

¹ Plin. *Epist.* vi. 19. : "patrimonii tertiam partem conferre jussit in ea quæ solo continerentur, deforme arbitratus, ut erat, *honorem petituros urbem Italianque, non pro patria sed pro hospitio aut stabulo, quasi peregrinantes, habere.*" This enactment was, in strictness, limited to the candidates for magistracies. The proportion was relaxed to a fourth part by the emperor Antoninus. Capitol. in *Anton.* 11.

ries were for once replenished from the superfluous stores of Gaul, Spain, or Africa.¹

In other particulars also which interested the feelings of the senatorial class, Trajan recurred to the principles of ancient usage. He refrained from demanding the consulship annually, and held the chief magistracy five times only during his possession of power. Whether in the curule chair, or on the benches of the senators, he was equally moderate in language and demeanor, recalling to the minds of his delighted colleagues the days of republican equality. *This is no lord*, exclaimed Martial; *this is an emperor, and the most just of senators. You command us to be free*, adds

Measures for
maintaining the
dignity of the
senate.

Pliny; *we will be free*.² He studied to enhance their self-respect, by scrupulously abstaining from dictating their election to offices. If ever he presumed to solicit their suffrages in favour of a friend, his obsequious manner was felt as a compliment not less persuasive than a command. Did this unaccustomed freedom of election increase the ardour of competition, he provided against its abuse by fresh enactments against bribery; he protected the true dignity of the fathers, by revoking the indulgence formerly allowed of voting by secret ballot.³ The well-known passage in which Pliny hails the return of

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 29–32.: “percrebuerat antiquitus urbem nostram nisi opibus Ægypti ali non posse. Superbiebat vetosa et insolens natio. . . . Refudimus Nilo suas copias . . . discat igitur Ægyptus non alimenta se nobis sed tributa præstare. . . . Actum erat de fecundissima gente si libera fuisset; pudebat sterilitatis insolitæ . . . cum pariter a te necessitatibus ejus pudorique subventum est.”

² Martial, x. 72.:

“Non est hic dominus sed imperator,
Sed justissimus omnium senator.”

Pliny, *Paneg.* 56.: “jubes esse liberos; erimus.” In this speech Pliny repeatedly contrasts the titles of “dominus” and “princeps.” When, in his letters from Bithynia, he addresses Trajan as “dominus,” he speaks as a military officer to his chief. But the word was already used as a courteous salutation to a superior.

³ Plin. *Epist.* vi. 19., iii. 20.

the golden age of publicity, is a valuable testimony to the gentlemanlike spirit common, we may believe, to his class.

Trajan too had pledged himself never to take the life of a senator, and his courage was equal to such self-denial. Thus, when he was privily informed that Licinius Sura, one of the most illustrious of the order, was conspiring against him, he replied by allowing Sura's

Trajan's courage and self-denial.

surgeon to anoint his eyes, and employing his barber to shave him. *Had my friend conceived designs against me,* he said next day, *he might have had his wish yesterday.* But all those about him were not equally innocent. Calpurnius Crassus, the same whom Nerva had pardoned, laid a plan for assassinating him. Trajan, though he could not exonerate the culprit, disdained to take cognisance of the crime, and left to the senate the inquiry and the sentence. Thus it was that Crassus suffered death at the hands of his own colleagues, who accepted the responsibility of an act which seemed necessary for their hero's safety.¹

If the nobles enjoyed under Trajan all the liberty they desired, and at least as much as they could use to general advantage, they were gratified, moreover, by the jealousy with which their ruler controlled the classes beneath them. The privileged orders at

Trajan's jealousy of guilds and trade combinations.

Rome, as elsewhere, regarded with apprehension the power of combination possessed by the traders, the artizans, the shopkeepers of the city, whose more active cupidity was always accumulating wealth, and whose ambition prompted them to tread too closely on the heels of their proud and listless superiors. Hence the anxiety of the senate and magistrates, even under the free state, to repress the union of the lower classes, whether in the shape of guilds, of clubs, or of any other co-operative societies. The danger was really a social one; but it was the policy of the government to represent it as political; and the shrewdest of the emperors

¹ Dion, lxviii. 15. Comp. Eutrop. viii. 2. : "ut omni ejus ætate unus Senator damnatus sit, atque is tamen per Senatum ignorante Trajano."

now found it his interest to humour these apprehensions, and to affect a rooted antipathy to all social combinations. The political character he attributes to them appears in the word *factions*, by which he describes them. The horror Trajan affected, or really felt, in regard to them extended into the provinces. When Pliny, as prefect of Bithynia, proposed to enrol an association of workmen at Nicomedia for the speedier extinction of fires, he feels it necessary not only to consult the emperor on the subject, but to explain the precautions he would take to prevent abuse. Trajan absolutely rejects the proposal, declaring that no precautions can avail to prevent such associations degenerating into dangerous conspiracies.¹

But though Trajan's mind did not rise to wide and liberal views for the advantage of the provinces, he neglected no favourable opportunity for the benefit of particular localities. His ears were always open to the suggestions of his prefects, and the petitions of his subjects. His hand was open to bestow endowments and largesses, to relieve public calamities, to increase public enjoyments, to repair the ravages of earthquakes and tempests, to construct roads and canals, theatres and aqueducts. The activity displayed throughout the empire in works of this unproductive nature, shows a great command of money, an abundant currency, easy means of transacting business, ample resources of labour, and well-devised schemes for combining and unfolding them. Throughout a reign of nineteen years Trajan was enabled to abstain from any new and oppressive taxation, while he refrained, with scrupulous good faith, from the alternative of confiscation and proscription. He was ashamed of his predecessors' accumulations, of their houses and estates, their ornaments and furniture, extorted from the fears of their miserable sub-

Trajan's administration combines splendour with economy.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* x. 35, 36. : "quodcumque nomen ex quacunque causa dederimus lis, qui in idem contracti fuerint, heteriæ, quamvis brevis, fient." He goes on to recommend the householders to provide means for their own protection against fire, "ac, si res poposcerit, accursu populi ad hoc uti."

jects, offered during life as bribes for their favour, or servilely bequeathed on deathbeds. He made a noble sacrifice of these ill-gotten riches, either casting them to his friends, or devoting the produce of their sale to works of utility and grandeur.¹ Under Trajan's admirable administration judicious economy went ever hand in hand with genuine magnificence.

The monuments of Roman jurisprudence contain many examples of Trajan's legislation. The *Replies* he addressed to the unceasing questions of his prefects and magistrates, were incorporated in the laws of the empire, and retained their force for many generations. The subjects, however, to which they relate are of minor interest, and illustrate no general principle to recommend them to the notice of historical students.² The legislator qualified himself for the task of propounding or applying legal principles, by assiduous labour in the administration of existing law. Trajan exchanged the toils of war for the labours of the forum. Like the great statesmen of the republic, he returned from the camp to the city to take his seat daily on the tribunals, with the ablest judges for his assessors; he heard appeals from the highest courts throughout his dominions, and the final sentence he pronounced assumed the validity of a legal enactment. The clemency of Trajan was as conspicuous as his love of justice, and to him is ascribed the noble sentiment that it is better that the guilty should escape than the innocent suffer.³ It was also a refinement in flattery, not uncom-

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 50, 51. This writer is extravagant in his eulogiums on the alleviation by Trajan of the legacy duty (*vicesima hereditatum*) paid by Roman citizens. The class that profited by it was small, but they were Roman citizens, and the remission was made by the fisc. Plin. *Paneg.* 37.

² See the enumeration of *Senatusconsulta*, edicts, rescripts, &c., of Trajan from the *Digest* and other sources in Francke's careful work. Such as related to questions between patrons and clients or freedmen, seem to have been conceived in the interests of the former class. Comp. Plin. *Ep.* x. 4. : Martial. x. 34.

³ *Digest.* xlviii. 19. 5. : "Sati^{us} esse impunitum relinqui facinus nocentis quam innocentem damnare."

monly adopted, to request the emperor to undertake the hearing in the first instance. Such was the case with the three trials which Pliny describes in one of his letters, when Trajan summoned him to his residence at Centumcellæ.

What more delightful, he exclaims, than to witness the prince's justice, gravity, and courtesy, even in his private retirement, where his virtues are generally hidden from the public gaze?

The first was the case of Claudius Aristo, a provincial magnate, who pleaded his own cause triumphantly against a calumnious imputation of treason. The second was a charge of adultery committed with a centurion by the wife of a military tribune. The husband had laid his grievance before the legatus, but the provincial magistrate had referred it to the imperator, as a matter of camp discipline, and Trajan took care, in giving judgment, to let it be understood that it was only as between soldiers that he took cognisance of it. The third was a complaint of the presumptive heirs to a property against the claimants under the will. They had addressed themselves to the emperor while he was absent in Dacia, and he appointed a day for the hearing on his return. One of the defendants was a freedman of the imperial household, and when the plaintiffs, who apparently had no real case, pretended that they dared not enforce their claim against a favourite of the emperor's, Trajan magnanimously replied, that Eurhythmus was not a Polycletus, nor was he a Nero.¹ It is clear that, whatever might be the legitimate mode of procedure, the first of these cases was referred to the emperor as a matter specially affecting his prerogative as chief of the state; the second, as has been said, because it related to the discipline of the army; and the third, from the peculiar claims which a freedman of the palace might be supposed to have on the prince's interest.

The justice, the modesty, the unwearied application of Trajan, were deservedly celebrated, no less than his valour in

¹ Plin. *Epist.* vi. 81.

war, and his conduct in political affairs; but a great part of his amazing popularity was owing, Trajan's personal qualities. no doubt, to his genial demeanour, and to the affection inspired by his qualities as a friend and associate. The importance which the Romans attached to the personal character of their eminent men, has generally filled their biographies with anecdotes of their private life. The prominence given by the establishment of monarchy to the man who occupied the highest place among them, brought this tendency into still stronger relief. It is to be regretted, however, that with the exception of his next predecessor, Trajan is the only emperor of whom there survives no such special monograph. Our account of his exploits, his fortune and his character, must be taken from the epitome of Dion's slight history, or pieced imperfectly together, from the *Panegyric* of Pliny, and the surer, but still more meagre evidence of coins and monuments. The trifling notices in the compendious works of Victor or Eutropius may confirm what we have gleaned from these sources, but hardly add another fact to it. Nevertheless, Trajan possesses an advantage over the other emperors, in the remains still existing of his correspondence in the letters of Pliny, which bring out not only the manners of the times, but in some degree the character of the prince also, and bear ample testimony to his minute vigilance and unwearied application, his anxiety for his subjects' well-being, the ease with which he conducted his intercourse with his friends, and the ease with which he inspired them in return.¹ Trajan's letters bespeak the polished gentleman no less than the statesman. Such too is the common tenour of all our evidence on this head. Trajan was fond of society, and of educated and even literary society. He was proud of being

¹ We are struck in perusing this correspondence with the apparent absence it betrays of general principles of government. In every emergency the prefect puts a direct question to the emperor. The emperor replies with a special answer. The brevity, point, and vigour of his replies bespeak his sense and judgment. The last letter of the series, in which he grants a favour to his correspondent, is a graceful instance of his courtesy as well as his kindness.

known to associate with the learned, and felt himself complimented when he bestowed on the rhetorician Dion the compliment of carrying him in his own chariot.¹ That such refinement of taste was not incompatible with excess in the indulgences of the table, was the fault of the times, and more particularly, perhaps, of the habits of camp life, to which he had been so much accustomed. Intemperance was always a Roman vice, and though Augustus might be remarkable for his sobriety, it would be wrong to infer from the examples of Nerva, Trajan, and his next successor, Hadrian, that the leaders of society at Rome had degenerated in the second century from those of the first, and of ages still earlier. Sulla and Cato the Censor, Julius Cæsar and Antonius, were free livers in all respects, and only less notorious for their excesses at table than Tiberius and Claudius, inasmuch as the greatness of their general character overshadowed their littleness.²

The affability of the prince, and the freedom with which he exchanged with his nobles all the offices of ordinary courtesy and hospitality, bathing, supping, or hunting as an equal in their company, constituted one of his greatest charms in the eyes of a jealous patriciate which had seen its masters too often engrossed by the flatteries of freedmen, and still viler associates. But Trajan enjoyed also the distinction, dear in Roman eyes, of a fine figure and a noble countenance. In stature he exceeded the common height, and on public occasions, when he

Trajan's figure
and countenance.

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 7. : *τί μιν λέγεις οὐκ οἶδα, φιλῶ δέ σε ὡς ἐμαυτόν.* Comp. Themist. *Orat.* v. on the philosophers patronized by the emperors.

² For the evidence of Trajan's intemperance see Dion, lxxviii. 7. ; Victor, *Cæs.* 13. ; *Epit.* 13, 48. ; Spartian. *Had.* 3. ; Lamprid. *Alex. Sev.* 39. ; Julian. *Cæsar*, p. 23. ; and comp. Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 664. : "Wie an Philipp von Macedonien und seinem Adel, an Alexander M. und seiner Generalen, die Uebertreibung des Genusses bei Bacchanalien gerügt wird, soll Trajan, wie Nerva, Hadrian und andere Zeitgenossen, einen fröhlichen Trunk geliebt haben." The habits of Philip and Alexander were those of semi-barbarians contrasted with the polished self-restraint of the Greeks, but the Romans had never adopted the Grecian polish in this particular.

loved to walk bareheaded in the midst of the senators, his grey hairs gleamed conspicuously above the crowd. His features, as we may trace them unmistakably on his innumerable busts and medals, were regular, and his face was the last of the imperial series that retained the true Roman type, not in the aquiline nose only, but in the broad and low forehead, the angular chin, the firm compressed lips, and generally in the stern compactness of its structure.¹ The thick and straight-cut hair, smoothed over the brow without a curl or a parting, marks the simplicity of the man's character, in a voluptuous age which delighted in the culture of flowing or frizzled locks. But the most interesting characteristic of the figure I have so vividly before me, is the look of painful thought, which seems to indicate a constant sense of overwhelming responsibilities, honourably felt and bravely borne, yet, notwithstanding much assumed cheerfulness and self-abandonment, ever irritating the nerves, and weighing upon the conscience.

The history of Trajan's reign is now brought down to the moment of his last departure from the city. A short interval of Eastern warfare still remains between this epoch and his death; but the incidents of his latter years belong to another connexion of events, and it will be convenient here to close the summary of his conduct and character.

¹ Winckelmann has observed that generally in the busts of Roman emperors the lips are closed, indicating peculiar reserve and dignity, free from human passions and emotions. A similar feeling may be traced in the earliest Greek statues, but it was not retained even by the Greeks in their representation of divinities. So a statue of Apollo is described by Propertius (ii. 23.):

"Hic equidem Phœbo visus mihi pulchrior ipso
Marmoreus tacita carmen *liare* lyra."

CHAPTER LXIV.

EFFECT OF THE FLAVIAN REACTION ON ROMAN LITERATURE.—COMPARISON OF LUCAN AND SILIUS ITALICUS: OF SENECA AND QUINTILIAN.—PLINY THE NATURALIST.—SCHOLASTIC TRAINING.—JUVENAL COMPARED WITH PERSIUS: STATIUS WITH OVID: MARTIAL WITH HORACE.—THE HISTORIANS: TACITUS: INGENUITY OF HIS PLAN.—HIS PREJUDICES AND MISREPRESENTATIONS.—PREVALENCE OF BIOGRAPHY.—TACITUS AND SUETONIUS.—UNCRITICAL SPIRIT OF HISTORICAL COMPOSITION.—MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE.—PLINY THE YOUNGER.—INTEREST ATTACHING TO HIS LETTERS.—MUTUAL APPROXIMATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SECTS.—PREVALENCE OF SUICIDE.—CORELLIUS.—SILIUS.—ARRIA.—CORRUPTION OF SOCIETY.—MILITARY MANNERS.—LIFE AMONG THE INTELLIGENT NOBLES.—SPURINNA.—PLINY THE ELDER.—PLINY THE YOUNGER.—VILLAS OF THE NOBILITY.—THE LAURENTINE AND TUSCAN OF PLINY.—THE SURRENTINE OF POLLIVS.—DECLINE OF MASCULINE CHARACTER AMONG THE ROMANS.—EXCEPTIONS.—TACITUS AND JUVENAL MASCULINE WRITERS.—CONTRAST IN THEIR TEMPERs.—LAST CHAMPIONS OF ROMAN IDEAS.

OUR latest chapters have supplied a narrative of political events, illustrated by personal anecdotes, and by such accounts of the monuments of the age as might serve to animate and explain it. We may now, in turn, devote a special section to the moral aspect of Roman society during the period thus reviewed, the reigns, namely, of Vespasian and his two sons, of Nerva and of Trajan; and, in so doing, we must observe again how strongly the Flavian period is marked by the reaction from the spirit of the Claudian empire. The establishment of the monarchy had kindled, as we have seen, the imagination of the Romans. Hard, selfish, prosaic as they naturally were, they had been roused to enthusiasm by the greatness of Julius, the fortune of Augustus, the wild magnificence of Caius, the grace and accomplishments of Nero. In their

Moral aspect of
the Flavian re-
action.

fond admiration of the glorious objects thus presented to them, they had invested the men themselves with the attributes of divinity, their government with a halo of immortality. They were persuaded that the empire itself, under the rule of this celestial dynasty, was an effluence from the divine regimen of the world; and they consented to regard the freaks of caprice and madness from which, as from the disturbances of the elements, they occasionally suffered, as mysterious but perhaps necessary evils.¹ Meanwhile they revelled without stint or misgiving in luxury, extravagance, and every vicious indulgence. No shade of apprehension for the future had yet passed over the festivals and orgies in which wealth and greatness rioted among them. The eternity of Rome, and the immutability of her fortunes, were supposed to be established in the decrees of fate. Her universal empire was the theme of poets and declaimers; and the idea that the Latian Jupiter was the Lord of all the world, which he held as it were in trust for the children of Romulus, was impressed without doubt or question on the minds of her exulting citizens.

The monstrous follies of Nero's latter years had, doubtless, more effect in unsealing men's eyes than his cruelties or extortions. His dancing and singing revolted their prejudices more than his proscriptions and confiscations. Their god had at last made himself contemptible, and the petulance which rebuked the worshippers of leeks and crocodiles in Egypt, was startled in its turn by the vileness of the human idol which it condescended itself to worship. Nevertheless, in the absence of any foreign opinion which could act upon the sentiments of the Romans, it might have been long before this surprise or shame was roused to action. Even Nero's frivolities would never,

Extinction of
the Caesarean
enthusiasm.

¹ Lucan, *Pharsal.* i. 37.: "Scelera ipsa nefasque Hac mercede placent." The Romans had doubtless applied to their own case the same reasoning which they addressed to their subjects: "quomodo sterilitatem aut nimios imbres, et cætera naturæ mala, ita luxum vel avaritiam dominantium tolerate." Tac. *Hist.* iv. 74.

perhaps, have been resented in arms by the senate, nor by the classes whose feelings the senate represented, had not the blow been first struck from the camps in the provinces, within which all the vigour, and most of the prejudices, of old Rome had taken refuge. The conviction which flashed upon the world from Galba's Spanish leaguer, that a prince could be created elsewhere than at Rome, was in itself a revolution. The ripening tradition of a hundred years was in an instant blighted. The quick succession of pretenders each clothing himself for a moment in the purple, and passing swiftly across the stage, dissipated what remained of the Cæsarean enthusiasm. Vespasian succeeded to a realm weary of illusion and disposed to obedience.

The blindness of this obedience may be estimated from the ease with which men conformed to the example of their

Effect of this
reaction on the
tone of Roman
literature.

new ruler's antique and homely character. The solid virtues of the founder of the Flavian dynasty exposed more strongly than ever the tinsel brilliancy of Nero. The sobered feeling of the age is vividly impressed on the remains of its literature. The writings of

Comparison of
Claudian and
Flavian writers.

the Flavian period present little of the lawless force and feverish extravagance which so generally mark the Claudian. The enthusiasm of the

Romans had been quelled. Their compositions are now subjected to more careful revision; they aim at exactness and completeness; they study artistic development. They exhibit the results of a conscious self-command, and already betray the effects of the new system of academic training disseminated through the schools by Vespasian. The contrast between the style of the two eras, so little removed in time, but so widely separated in ideas and sentiments, may be illustrated by a comparison of parallel writers. Thus, for

Lucan and Sil-
lius Italicus.

instance, we may set Lucan side by side with Silius Italicus. Both were men of affluence and noble birth; both well versed in the liberal knowledge of their time; both familiar with the court, the one with that of Nero, the other with that of the Flavian emperors, and

with the high-bred society that flitted through it. Their fortunes, indeed, were in the end widely different. The death of the one was precipitated by his own uncontrolled but generous impetuosity, while Silius cultivated patience under the sway of emperors, bad and good, indifferently, lived in safety to a ripe old age, in the enjoyment of every civil honour, and at last perished by his own act and will, when sated with life, and harassed by an incurable malady, he resolved to finish his career by abstinence, and resisted the dissuasions of his friends through the long-protracted agony of a theatrical exit.¹ Both devoted themselves to poetical composition, and exulted in the applause of their contemporaries not less than in the hopes of an enduring reputation.² They shared a kindred taste, also, in their choice of themes; for both made the rare selection of a national event for the subject of an epic, and both entered on their tasks in the spirit of rhetoricians rather than of poets. But their mode of execution was widely different. Lucan, with less imagination and less invention than any one perhaps of the great masters of epic song, is the most independent and self-sufficing of them all. He displays throughout a daring disregard for precedent and authority. He venerates no master; he follows no model; he had never studied, one is almost tempted to imagine that he had never read, Virgil. He seems hardly to look forward from one of his cantos to another, exhibits no unity of purpose, sets forth no moral, proposes to us no hero. Nevertheless, in spite of this defiance of all rules and traditions, he succeeds, by the mere force of vehemence and audacity, in persuading us to admit him within the hallowed

¹ Silius was actually a little the elder of the two: but Lucan died A. D. 65, at the age of twenty-six; Silius was living nearly forty years later, and composed his poem under Domitian, at least twenty years after the date of the *Pharsalia*.

² The contemporary reputation enjoyed by Lucan is shown by the well-known line of Juvenal, *Sat.* vii. 79.: "Contentus fama jaceat Lucanus in hortis Marmoreis." The estimation in which Silius was held, may be judged from several compliments paid him by Martial and Pliny.

circle of the master spirits of poetry. Silius, on the contrary, creeps, while Lucan bounds, and almost flies. Silius writes with all the principles of art in his head, and all the works of the great models ranged in order round his desk. His tropes and similes seem to be selected from a common-place book, and he seldom ventures to describe a striking incident, without invoking the rhythm and diction of the singer of the *Æneid*.¹ But even the sustained and agreeable correctness of his fifteen thousand verses almost deserves our admiration, and we feel that such a poem could hardly have inherited the immortality which is so large a share of fame, had not its editors, its transcribers, and its readers, regarded it, in some sense, as the representative of an epoch, and important for its just conception.² For Silius does, in fact, represent to us the refined, the highly instructed, the now tamed and sobered patrician of the Flavian era, to whom the early history of his countrymen was a fit subject for ideal description, but bore no practical reference to the circumstances around him. In his mind politics are a mere blank. He neither reflects on the present nor regrets the past. To him the warriors of the old republic are no longer the men of the forum and the capitol, such as he sees before his own eyes: they have passed into the twilight of myths and demi-gods. To him Scipio is a second Hercules, the achiever of labours, the tamer of monsters, the umpire of the divinities of Pleasure and Virtue. Hannibal is an ogre or giant of romance, who seems to vanish at the catastrophe of the story in a tempest of flame or cloud.³ But the listless complacence

¹ Pliny's criticism on Silius Italicus, "scribebat carmina majore cura quam ingenio" (*Epist.* iii. 7.), may be taken as a motto for the literary character of the age.

² It should be observed, however, that the poem of Silius Italicus seems to have been long lost to the ancients, who never quote it, and was first made known to us by the accidental discovery of a single manuscript in the fifteenth century. Bähr, *Gesch. der Römisch. Literatur*, i. 256.

³ *Sil. Ital.* xv. 20, foll. xvii. 614. :

"Mihi satque superque
Ut me Dardaniæ matres, atque Itala tellus,
Dum vivam, expectent, nec pacem pectore norint."

with which such a poem as the *Punica* must have been written and perused, and the faint applause its recital must have elicited, plainly reveal to us the spirit of moderation and mediocrity which had succeeded, in the high places of Roman society, to the whirlwinds of passion and licentiousness.

A similar comparison may be instituted between the two most eminent prose-writers of these periods, Seneca and Quintilian. There is a striking correspondence between these celebrated men in many particulars. Both were Spaniards by origin, and were bred, we may suppose, in the same school of florid rhetoric, which was supposed to impart a peculiar flavour to all their countrymen's compositions. Each was attached to the imperial court of his own era; for Quintilian, after a first transient visit to Rome, is said to have come over from Spain in the train of Galba, and became, in course of time, the favoured tutor of Domitian's nephews. Both were raised from moderate station to high official rank and distinction. As regards the natural bias of their genius, both devoted themselves with enthusiasm to the instruction of their age, and became teachers, or rather preachers, of the doctrines which lay nearest to their hearts. If philosophy was the religion of Seneca, the rights and duties of the true orator were held in no less sacred estimation by Quintilian, and the author of the well-known *Institution of a Speaker* believed that he was training his pupil in the path of virtue, while equipping him for a public career.¹ But with these points of analogy between them, no two masters of Latin speech stand in more marked contrast to one another in all that regards the acquired qualities of taste and judgment. In his stilted truisms or transparent paradoxes Seneca represents an age of overweening presumption and pretence, while the sound sense of Quintilian has been justly admired by all sober critics. Following

Seneca and
Quintilian.

¹ This feeling may be traced almost throughout Quintilian's work; but it is distinctly expressed in the preface: "oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest." . . . "sit orator vir talis, qui vere sapiens appellari potest."

in the wake of a period abandoned to the false glitter of rhetorical fancy, Quintilian sets himself, with unerring instinct, to correct the prevailing theories of rhetorical composition, and restore the true standard of taste. His judgment is independent and original. Opposed as he is to the errors of his time, he does not rush back precipitately to an earlier and purer age for his models. He knows of no perfect age of oratory, no absolute example of eloquence. His mind is open to excellence in any quarter, and he can see blemishes in every school, and in every master of the art. None perhaps of his critical canons would be questioned in the most enlightened age of rhetorical criticism; nor do we now dispute the justice of any sentence pronounced from his tribunal on the heroes of ancient literature. If indeed, as he says himself of oratory, the student who admires Cicero has already advanced far in the art of which Cicero was so noble an ornament, so we may affirm, that to appreciate Quintilian's judgments is to have mastered the theory of literary composition.¹ It would have been impossible for the age of Claudius and Nero to have produced a work so tolerant, so temperate, so sage as the *Institution*, and we must acknowledge the significance of the revolution it denotes in the taste and feeling of the people.

It may be presumed that Quintilian represents a class of contemporary critics, and that his careful discrimination of the rules of composition was strictly in the fashion of his day. But we know individuals only, and we can only compare together individual examples. The scientific method of the Romans in the department of literary criticism, exemplified in this grammarian, contrasts widely with their vague empiricism in natural philosophy, as reflected in the work of the elder Pliny. In point of time, indeed, Pliny may be claimed for either of the generations we are now considering; and the contrast before us is not so much

Pliny the naturalist.

¹ Quintil. *Inst.* x. i. 112.: "Ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero vaide placebit." Comp. § 125. his unfavourable judgment of Seneca.

of two successive epochs, as of ordinary training in two several branches of knowledge. It is only to the moral sciences indeed, as taught among the Romans, that the term *training* can be fairly applied. In natural philosophy they were left to pick up knowledge by desultory reading, or casual observation, without system or analytic instruction of any kind. Even the extensive professoriate of the Flavian and later emperors comprised no chairs for the teaching of mathematics, astronomy, geography, or any branch of natural history. The crude and unwieldy encyclopædia of the *Natural History* has been preserved, in all probability, by its being the only great repertory of facts of the kind to which the inquirers of Western Europe in the Middle Ages could refer; and this happy accident has revealed to us the remarkable deficiency of Roman civilization in this particular. Amassed from a boundless variety of sources, and from writers, both Greek and Latin, of every degree of credit, the data presented by Pliny embrace a wonderful amount of correct observation and true tradition; but the assiduous collector seems to have exercised little judgment, and depending almost wholly on books, made a very imperfect use of his own eyes and experience. He cares not to discriminate between his authorities; he does not compare, digest, select, and reject; he simply accumulates, till his judgment becomes paralysed, as it were, by the weight imposed upon it. Oppressed with the immensity and multiformity of Nature, the stores of which are thus unrolled in a confused and shifting scroll before him, Pliny does not demand a Purpose and a Providence to maintain the harmony which he fails to appreciate; he denies the existence of the law which he cannot perceive, and, in the craven spirit of his age, takes refuge in the shadowy dream-land of Pantheism from the perplexity in which his own empiricism involves him. The works of Nature are to him Nature itself, and Nature itself is the God of Nature.¹

¹ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ii. 1. foll.: "Mundum . . . numen esse credi par est, æternum, immensum, neque genitum neque interiturum unquam . . . Idem rerum naturæ opus, et rerum ipsa natura. . . Solem mundi esse totius animum

It would seem that the establishment of the professorial system throughout the empire by Vespasian, further amplified by his successors, helped to unfold the characteristics we remark in the mind and literature of the age before us. The compositions of the Flavian era, it will be readily allowed, are impressed with the features of accuracy and finish, and may be advantageously compared, in this respect, with the loose and somewhat aimless style of the writers of the age preceding, who had been trained by the declaimers only. Silius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus are poets of the School and the Academy. They have imbibed the lessons of conventional criticism under methodical and sensible teachers, men of Quintilian's stamp; and they have sought and won, after many essays, the prizes of Alba and the Capitol. The satires of Juvenal are more definite in their scope than those of Persius. There is no vagueness of aim, no mistiness of language, about the Flavian moralist, the academic professor of virtue. The crimes and vices he denounces are pilloried in the public eye; every line as it speeds along, flings its dart of contumely upon them; and we rise from perusing any one of his pieces (except the Sixteenth, which is probably, and the Fifteenth, which is possibly not his own) with the feeling that there is not a verse deficient, nor a verse redundant, throughout it. For the defects of Persius, youth may be pleaded in excuse: such, however, as we have received them, his poems want this steadiness of aim; and we

The poets of
scholastic
training.

Juvenal com-
pared with Per-
sius.

ac planius mentem; hunc principale naturæ regimen ac numen credere licet. . . . Quisquis est Deus, si modo est alius, et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus visus, totus auditus, totus animi, totus sui. . . . Deus est mortali juvare mortalem, etc. . . . Invenit tamen . . . sibi ipsa mortalitas numen, quominus etiam plana de Deo conjectatio esset. Toto quippe mundo et locis omnibus, omnibusque horis omnium vocibus Fortuna sola invocatur. . . . Pars alia et hanc pellit, astroque suo eventus assignat, nascendi legibus. . . . Sedere cepit sententia hæc, pariterque et eruditum vulgus et rude in eam cursu vadit. . . . Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia ne Deum quidem posse omnia. . . . per quæ declaratur haud dubie *naturæ potentia*, idque esse quod Deum vocamus."

often pause in reading them to hesitate and reflect, and after all to little purpose, in order to grasp his object. The satires of Persius are the natural product of an age which advanced words above things, and urged the writer to seek a momentary triumph for a smart or sounding phrase, rather than give lasting satisfaction to his readers by the interest of a sustained argument.

Another star in the Flavian constellation, another product of the same era, is the brilliant poet Statius. The Academic literature of Rome was a refined adaptation of the style first created at Alexandria by the lec- Statius compared with Ovid. turers of the Museum under the sunshine of court

patronage. Antimachus, whose poem on the war of Thebes is said to have been the model of the epic of Statius, was a forerunner of the Alexandrian school; but, in taking for his guide this ancient master, the accomplished Roman allowed himself some licence, and studied superior refinement. The chief points indeed of incident and character in a theme so trite had become arbitrarily fixed, and the Flavian critics would hardly suffer a new competitor for the prize of excellence to depart widely from his formula. Amidst all the licentiousness of prevailing unbelief, the mythology of the poets was as much a matter of conventional treatment as the sacred painting of the Middle Ages; and we must bear in mind, that much in their mode of treatment which seems to us vapid and jejune, appeared far otherwise to a generation which saw it in the light of an established tradition. As regards his subject, Statius walks in fetters: he could not create or innovate. Nevertheless, there is, perhaps, no ancient epic so perfect in form and argument as the Thebaid. Its story is the most compact of all; its incidents and characters, however palely delineated, are not less various in proportion to its length than those of the Iliad; its unity is undoubtedly more complete. If it wants the central figure which predominates over the vicissitudes of the Æneid, it presents us instead with a grand procession of Seven Heroes of equal fame and prowess, in all the sevenfold blaze of their

legendary glory. But the versifier of a cultivated age and a refined society cannot impart a sustained and lofty interest to a story purely mythological; and the contemporaries of Statius felt, we may believe, as much as modern readers, that it was not for the story that his poem was to be studied. The merits of this admirable poet are such as detract from, rather than enhance, the proper charm of epic song. Statius is a miniature-painter, employed by the freak of a patron or from some peculiar misapprehension of his own powers, on the production of a great historic picture. Every part, every line, every shade is touched and re-touched; approach the canvas and examine it with glasses, every thread and hair has evidently received the utmost care, and taken the last polish; but, step backwards, and embrace the whole composition in one gaze, and the general effect is confused from want of breadth and largeness of treatment.

The Thebaid was recited, we may believe, in portions to connoisseurs and critics, and the author was doubtless misled by the applause which naturally was excited by the exquisite finish of successive periods. A genteel mob assembled on the day of each promised performance, and the youth of Italy carried off the fragments in their memory, and repeated them to the admiring circles of their acquaintance.¹ Assuredly their judgment would have been modified, had they stayed to view the composition in its full proportions; and the author himself would have done more justice to his powers, could he have renounced the insidious flatteries of his age, and written in patience and solitude for immortality.² The

¹ Juvenal, vii. 82. :

“Curritur ad vocem jucundam et carmen amicæ
Thebaidos, lætam fecit cum Statius urbem
Promisitque diem.”

Compare the author's self-congratulations. *Theb.* xii. in. fin. :

“Itala jam studio discit memoratque juvenus.”

² Thus the outline of the description of the death of Amphiaræus (*Theb.* vii. 690–823.), relieved from many tinsel ornaments and laboured effects, is one of the noblest flights of poetry; and the discovery of Achilles among the daugh-

genius of Statius may bear comparison in some respects with that of Ovid, while the contrast which strikes us at once in the perusal of their works is just such as would result from the different character of their times. The author of the *Thebaid*, the *Achilleid*, and the *Sylvæ* is hardly inferior in readiness and fertility to the distinguished singer of the *Metamorphoses*, the *Heroids*, and the *Art of Love*. But while the earlier writer is suffered by the taste of his era to riot in the wanton indulgence of his humour, and let his fancy rove with loose untrammelled graces, the later is subjected to strict curb and rein, his paces are those of the manège, not of nature; all is art, all is discipline and training; every effect is exquisite in itself, but the effort is too apparent in the author, and the strain on the mind of the reader too fatiguing. Ovid lost half his strength by his licentious exuberance; Statius deprives himself of his real vigour by swathing his own limbs in bandages. A true instinct is charmed neither by the splay foot of the mountain peasant girl, nor by the tortured limb of the Chinese lady of fashion.

Almost every group of three or four lines in Statius constitutes in itself an idea, perhaps a conceit, a play of thought or of words; it fastens itself like a burr on the memory: such is the distinctness of his vision, such the elaborate accuracy of his touch. The epigram is the crowning result of this elaborate terseness of diction, and this lucid perception of the aim in view. The verses of Martial are the quintessence of the Flavian poetry. The fine point to which he sharpens his conceptions is the

Martial compared with Horace.

ters of *Lycomedes* (*Achill.* ii. 200.), though a little overlaid with words, seems to reach the summit of sublimity:

... "cum grande tuba, sic jussus, Agyrtæ
Insonuit
Illius intactæ cecidere a pectore vestes:
Jam clypeus, breviorque manu consumitur hasta;
Mira fides, Ithacumque humeris excedere visus,
Ætolumque ducem: tantum subita arma calorque
Martius horrenda confundit luce Penates"

last triumph of that verbal exactness and mechanical ingenuity to which we pay a tribute of hardly less admiration in Statius and Valerius Flaccus. The *careful felicity* of Horace is reproduced in Martial under the form which most aptly befits the later age in which he flourished. The lyrics of the Augustan period are characteristically represented by the epigrams of the Flavian. The style of Martial has indeed this advantage over that of Horace, that he goes always straight to his point, and there can be no misconception of his drift; while Horace seems sometimes to wander from his purpose, to lose himself and leave hold, at least for a moment, of his subject. There are several of the Odes, the exact scope of which the critics cannot ascertain; the leading idea is sometimes lost at the outset, and unrecovered to the end.¹ As regards this uncertainty of aim, the Eclogues even of the correct and self-possessed Virgil may be contrasted with the *Sylvæ* of Statius. Among the thirty poems of this Flavian collection, there is none about the scope and meaning of which there can be any question; none in which the leading idea is lost or overlaid by thick springing fancies; while more than one of the Eclogues remains to this day an insoluble problem to the interpreters.² This again may be noted as a direct result of the systematic education, the academic or professorial training, of the Flavian period.

In the department of poetical composition this precision of aim and studied completeness of execution tend to prosaic and positive results. They lead the mind to dwell on material objects, as the most proper for accurate delineation. Hence the poetry of the Flavian age is generally limited in its range, and refers mostly to the material elements of the civilization which

The historians
of the Flavian
age.

¹ Thus we must look for the help of allegory to explain *Od.* i. 14, 15., iii. 4. In iii. 2, 3, 27 and others—"fertur equis auriga"—the poet seems to lose his command of Pegasus. This carelessness is possibly studied, and may perhaps be effective according to the proper idea of dithyrambics; but it is worth while to contrast it with the neatness and precise execution of Statius or Martial.

² Such, for instance, are the first, the fourth, and the eighth eclogue.

lies within the immediate scope of its vision. If it ventures to unfold to an unbelieving age the mystic lore of ancient supernaturalism, it invests traditions and legends with the hard colouring of modern actuality. The nymphs and heroes of Statius seem copied from the courtiers of the Palatine; the Medea of Valerius Flaccus is a Virago of the imperial type, a Lollia or an Agrippina. In history, however, which, at the period now before us, has outstripped poetry in interest and value, the tendencies of the age produce new and important consequences. An age of positive thought develops legitimate history. The historian of the Flavian era is no longer a chronicler or a romancer. He may seek perhaps to mould the truth to his own prejudices; but he is not a mere artist, indifferent to truth altogether. He is a philosopher, and recognizes a mission. He has his own theories of society and politics; the events of the period before him group themselves in his mind in certain natural combinations, according to the leading idea to which they are subordinated. If he is a man of imagination, he paints the world from the type impressed on his own organs of vision. Whether or not the facts be correctly represented, they are at least true to him; he describes what he sees, or really fancies that he sees. Works that bear this stamp of imagination are immortal. Their details may be inexact; the genius by which they are produced may be uncritical; but their general effect is strong and vivid, and they leave a mark behind them which cannot be effaced. Appian traces the an-
Appian and
Plutarch.
 nals of mankind along the lines by which the various races and countries are politically connected with Rome. In Plutarch's mind, on the contrary, history is the painting of individual character. Each writer works out his own conception in wide contrast with the other; but each collects and marshals his facts with the sole object of illustrating it.

Livy, indeed, the great historian of the Augustan age, writes with a strong and vivid perception of the scenes and

Tacitus com-
pared with
Livy.

incidents he describes. The men whose portraits decorate the long galleries through which he roams, have a distinct form and character in his mind, and he paints truly from the lineaments before him. But Livy's was not an age of speculation. He had no doctrine in history or politics, beyond a vague conviction of the greatness and invincibility of Rome, and an assurance of her triumphant destiny. Very different is the case with Livy's great rival, Tacitus. The subtler genius of the later period is reflected on the pages of this philosophic theorist, who constructs the history of the empire with reference to a dominant idea in his own mind. The object of Tacitus, conceived in the patrician school to which he had attached himself, is to show that the supremacy of Rome, the final cause of her existence, depends on the preëminence of an oligarchy, with which all her glories and successes are closely entwined. He regards the downfall of this caste under the Cæsarean usurpation as the fruitful source of the degradations and miseries by which her later career has been sullied. The empire has been disgraced by tyranny, by profligacy, and base compliances at home; by defeats and humiliations abroad. The free spirit of the optimate has been repressed, and he has been constrained to cringe, and flatter, not patricians only of equal nobility with his own, but the meaner offspring of the lesser houses; not new men only, and unennobled Romans, but even upstart foreigners and enfranchised bondmen. Great national disasters have indicated, in rapid succession, the disgust of the gods at the degeneracy of their chosen favourites, at the contempt into which their own altars have fallen, and the blasphemy by which divine honours have been extended to the vilest of mortals. The spirit and idea of Tacitus's history is closely represented in the kindred epic of Lucan, which only expresses more bluntly and without even the pretence of historic impartiality, as was natural in a youth and a poet, the feeling of indignant dissatisfaction common to both. But Tacitus, mature in years and cool in temper, used more

Tacitus and
Lucan.

discretion in the handling of his theory than the reckless declaimer of five-and-twenty. The plan of Lucan's poem entangles him in the causes of the revolution which they deplore and denounce in common; and we learn from some of the wisest as well as the most eloquent verses in the *Pharsalia*, that the revolution, even in the eyes of an aristocrat, was unavoidable; that it was produced by the crimes and excesses of that very period of aristocratic domination to which both look back with equal regret; that the Roman oligarchy fell by its own vices, vices inherent in its political constitution, as well as by the strong rebound of its own victories and triumphs.¹ We perceive that its fall, once consummated, was final and irretrievable; that no honour or generosity in a Julius or an Augustus, no martial ardour in a Tiberius, no discretion in a Caius or a Claudius, no dignity in a Nero, could have restored the vital glow of a divine inspiration which had fled forever with the Scipios and the Gracchi.

It was, however, an error in Lucan thus to lift the veil from the licentiousness of the era he affected to lament. Tacitus, with more skill and prudence, draws the eyes of his audience from it altogether. The historian commences his review of Roman affairs with the period which succeeds the revolution, after its first and immediate fruits have been reaped, and the benefits, undeniable as they were, which it in the first instance produced, had lost some of their original brightness in his countrymen's memory. The Cæsarean usurpation had run a course of sixty years,—years of unexampled prosperity, as Tacitus must himself have acknowledged, had he set them fairly before his eyes,—when he takes up the thread of events, and devotes the labour of his life to blazoning the disasters which have never ceased, as he pretends, to flow from it. He confines himself to the decline and fall of the system which had now

Ingenuity of
Tacitus in fix-
ing the limits
of his history.

¹ Lucan, *Pharsal.* i. 84–182.: “Tu causa malorum Facta tribus dominis communis Roma
Et concussa fides et multis utile bellum.”

indeed passed its brief and fallacious prime. He traces the failing fortunes of the republic from the defeat of Varus, and the gloom diffused over the city in the last days of Augustus by the anticipation of a younger tyranny, and closes his gloomy review with the fall of the last of the despots, the mean, the cruel, the jealous Domitian.¹ Thus he embraces precisely the whole period of disgrace and disaster by which the crimes of the Cæsars were chastised; nor will he mar the completeness of this picture by introducing into it the figures of those regenerators of the empire whom he himself lived afterwards to see, the record of whose virtue and fortune he reserves for the solace of his old age.² His narrative of the civil wars which followed the death of Nero, and of the three Flavian administrations, was the first written, under the name of *Histories*; while the account of the earlier period, known by the title of *Annals*, was produced subsequently. The work which treats of contemporary affairs is more full in detail than the other, but we may believe that the author regarded the two as a single whole; and it is possible that he may have contemplated them himself under a single title. The unity of their common design, as a lasting record of the Cæsarean revolution traced to its distant consequences, would have been marred by a glowing peroration on the fame and prosperity of Trajan; nor do we know that Tacitus ever actually accomplished the labour of love which he anticipated as his crowning work. Perhaps, after all, he felt that the senatorial government of his patron rested on no solid foundations, and shrank at the last moment from glorifying the merits of a constitution which depended on the moderation of its chief alone. Yet we should have valued as the noblest of legacies a temperate and candid disquisition, by one so acute and eloquent, on the state of society which rendered Trajan's rule

¹ Tac. *Ann.* i. 1.: "consilium mihi pauca de Augusto et extrema tradere, mox Tiberii principatum et cetera."

² Tac. *Hist.* i. 1.: "quod si vita suppeditet principatum D. Nervæ et imperium Trajani, uberiores securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui."

the best then possible, and made the existence of so much good so lamentably precarious.

In the absence of legal checks on the caprice or tyranny of the ruler, the dagger of the assassin, or at best the revolt of the legions, had been the last hope and safe-guard of the classes obnoxious to his jealousy.

Prepossession
of Tacitus in
favour of Tra-
jan.

The moral we should be tempted, at first sight, to draw from the history of Tacitus, is that the moderation of the Flavian empire was produced at last by the repeated examples of successful intrigue against the bad emperors. But this would be a wrong conclusion. The moderation and justice of the virtuous princes, such as Vespasian and Trajan, was the effect of their personal character, combined with their fortunate circumstances. Vespasian was honoured for his military prowess, and feared for his military firmness; but the simplicity of his tastes exempted him from the temptation to outshine the magnates of the city, and his frugal habits sustained him in the path of probity and uprightness. The personal modesty of Trajan was equal to that of his predecessor, and for the brilliant and costly monuments with which he loved to decorate the city he provided by foreign conquests, which, at the same time, kept his soldiers employed, and engrossed the attention of his most restless subjects. He resided, moreover, only occasionally in the capital, and was preserved by his martial occupations from the dangers of rivalry in show or popularity with the scions of historic families at Rome. The senators felt instinctively that their best security lay in their chief's distant engagements. Hence the prepossession of Tacitus, which would otherwise seem unworthy of him, in favour of military renown. We have remarked his sneers at the peaceful disposition ascribed to earlier princes, and the contrast he exultingly indicates between the pusillanimity of Tiberius, of Claudius, or of Nero, and the victorious ardour of his own patron. It was but too true, as the nobles were well aware, that the liberties of Rome, the preëminence, more properly, of the Roman optimates, was only maintained, as far as it was maintained at

all, under any of the emperors, by the subjugation of the foreigner, and the overthrow of liberty abroad. Such is the theory carelessly avowed by Lucan; and the thoughtful historian, though more reticent in expression, betrays no more real respect for the dignity and common rights of man than the impetuous declaimer of the *Pharsalia*.¹

The theory of Roman politics to which Tacitus committed himself involved him in two sins against truth and candour.

Certain characteristics of his unfairness to the earlier period.

We cannot read the *Annals* and *Histories* with care and impartiality without perceiving that the author often allows himself to repeat anecdotes which he knew to have no firm foundation, for the sake of illustrating the view he chooses to give of some prominent personages. No passage in the *Annals* exemplifies more strikingly the dissimulation imputed to Tiberius, than the reception given to Sejanus's suit for an imperial alliance. Yet the narrative, whatever its source, is highly embellished, if not wholly fabricated.² Tacitus we must say at least, gave it too easy credence, and flung over it a deeper colour, for the sake of the dark shade it casts on the character of the arch-dissembler. Nor is this, as has been shown, the only instance of his disregard for truthfulness in subservience to the demands of a theory, which required him to deepen the suspicions attaching to the character of so many of the Cæsars. Again we must remark the artifice by which the crimes and vices of the emperors are arrayed in evidence against the imperial government itself, and denounced as sins against the moral sense of an outraged society. Even if we grant that there is no exaggeration in these hideous pictures, yet we must not allow the most accomplished of painters to

¹ This spirit appears in many passages of Lucan's poem. Compare more particularly i. 8, foll. vii. 421, foll. It is betrayed by Tacitus wherever he speaks of the foreign affairs of the empire, and of her contests with Britons, with Germans, or with Parthians. The "Life of Agricola" is animated with it throughout, nor is it banished even from the "Germany," the subject of which afforded a graceful opportunity for renouncing and regretting it.

² See above in chapter xlv. of this history (Tac. *Ann.* iv. 39, 40.).

disguise the important fact that such horrors belong to the age and the class, and not to the individual culprit only. The barbarities wreaked by Nero and Domitian on the high-born nobles of Rome were but the ordinary precautions of the trembling slaveholders whose lives were held from day to day by the tenure of physical repression unrelentingly exercised against their own bondmen. The existence of slavery, and the lack of religious and moral principle, which loosened the rivets of Pagan society, may account for the atrocities commonly imputed to the inherent viciousness of the imperial system, or to the personal depravity of individual emperors. Tacitus himself was no doubt a master of slaves, and his writings bear, it must be confessed, the impress of a rooted disregard for the rights and feelings of human nature, apart from his own class and order, such as might naturally be engendered by the social atmosphere around him. On the other hand, few even of the gravest characters of our history were exempt from turpitudes which have heaped especial infamy on Tiberius and Nero. Such delinquencies must be weighed with constant reference to a peculiar standard of morals. Even the mild and virtuous Pliny allows himself to compose verses of a nature which would indicate among us the most shameless indecency; and the list of names by which he excuses himself includes a large number of the first citizens of the free state as well as of the empire.¹

It is not necessary, however, to prove that both the cruelty and the licentiousness of Roman society date from some

¹ Pliny, *Epp.* iv. 14., v. 3., vii. 4. Such indecencies, neatly expressed in verses of society, after the manner of the later Greek epigrammatists, might be veiled under the euphemism of *facetus* or "elegant." Comp. "tunicis subductis facetus," Hor. *Sat.* i. 2. 26., and the use of the word in Martial's epigrams on Sulpicia, x. 35. 38. Although Tacitus himself is not mentioned by Pliny among the writers of such "Hendecasyllables," the fragmentary notice of Fulgentius in *Mythol.*, "Corn. Tacitus in libro facetiarum," may throw a shade of suspicion even over this grave philosopher.

His satirical
misrepresenta-
tion of his
times.

hundred years before the establishment of the empire, and were the seeds rather than the fruit of the imperial despotism. A more specious charge against the empire is, that under its leaden rule little scope was left for the free and healthy exercise of mind, and that the faculties curbed in their legitimate exercise expended themselves on gross material interests. Not the *Histories* only, but all the other works of Tacitus, are drawn up almost in the form of indictments against his own age. The treatise on the *Decline of Eloquence* traces some of the worst symptoms of national degeneracy, not only to the change in the laws, the work of chiefs and princes, but to the change in manners, and especially in education, the same which had been long before remarked and lamented by Horace. The *Life of Agricola* is a satire not only on the timid and jealous emperor, but on the indiscipline of the legions, the incompetency of the commanders, the apathy and sensuality of society, with all which the great captain waged distinguished warfare. The *Germany* presents an elaborate contrast between the vices of a polished age and the virtues of barbarism. It is an alarum rung in the ears of a careless generation, more solemn and impressive in its tone, more interesting from its details, but hardly more sound than Lucan's rhetorical outcry on his countrymen's disgust at poverty, and eager greed of gold. It is much to be regretted that the philosopher should not have recognised, any more than the poet, the regenerative tendencies of his age, and have lent them no support from his name and influence. The aim of the mere satirist is always profitless and generally ill-directed. Not in the harsh and impracticable dogmas of Stoicism, nor merely in the lofty aspirations of Christianity, but even in the wise preaching of schools of eclectic moralists, whom we shall further notice hereafter, lay the germs of renovation; and we shall trace in another generation the action of a Dion, a Plutarch, an Apollonius, and lament that we cannot add to the list of Roman reformers the illustrious name of Tacitus.

Such is the unfairness into which the historian is betrayed, in attempting to uphold the paradox that the corrupt and tottering oligarchy of the senate under Pompeius and Milo was the noblest and strongest of governments, and the not more defensible paradox that just such a government was restored under the auspices of Nerva and Trajan. We must acknowledge, indeed, that the same training in dialectic subtleties which urged him to maintain a political theory, rendered him generally superior to the rhetorical declaimers before him. In philosophical remark Tacitus is more profound than Cicero, more just than Seneca; while none would pretend to compare him with an ingenious sophist like Sallust. Born in the reign of Claudius or Nero, he passed his early years in the gloomy silence of an age of terror, and the posts in which he was placed by Vespasian and retained by Domitian, constrained him still to control the utterance of the indignant patriotism boiling within him.¹ The habit of looking to the emperor as the source of political action, natural to his position, would give to his account of public affairs a biographical rather than a historical character. The efforts, easily discernible, which he makes to impart to it a more general interest by introducing larger disquisitions on manners, and some statistical details, evince, under these circumstances, unusual vigour of mind. More than once, indeed, Tacitus breaks away, not from the palace only, but from the capital, to describe the condition of the legions on the frontier, or of the foreign possessions of the state. The reader, disgusted with

The writings
of Tacitus
more biograph-
ical than his-
torical.

¹ Our nearest approximation to the date of the historian's birth is derived from a passage of Pliny the younger, *Epist.* vii. 20., where he speaks of himself as somewhat the junior of the two. Pliny was born in 63. Tacitus married the daughter of Agricola about the year 77, being then probably not less than twenty one. Of his official career, he says, at the beginning of the *Histories*: "Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius nec beneficio nec injuria cogniti. Dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim." He was absent from Rome for four years before the death of Agricola in 93. (*Agric.* 45.); probably in office in the provinces. Nerva made him consul suffect in 97.

the horrors of the Cæsarean court, glances with pleasure at Egypt and Palestine, and gains a new insight into Roman ideas, from the views of an intelligent Roman on the wonders of the Nile-land, or the superstitions of the Jews. But these digressions are rare, and we regret that Tacitus had not more of the spirit of Herodotus, or that his notions of historical composition forbade him to range more freely over the field of Roman politics abroad. We must not fail, however, to give him full credit for what he has done in this particular. Writers of less genius, such as Suetonius for instance, were subdued altogether to the biographical vein by the circumstances of the times. To a Roman citizen, especially if resident in Rome, and still more if engaged, however slightly, in the conduct of affairs, the personal character of the reigning prince, with all the anecdotes which might serve to illustrate it, would naturally supersede every other topic of interest. Whether in the senate or the palace, in the forum or the circus, the Cæsar was the centre of observation. The general welfare of the empire, and the particular interests of cities and provinces, would hardly divert the historian's attention for a moment from the imperial figure in the foreground. He would have no care to generalize his remarks on the current of public affairs. To him the Roman empire would be merely Rome; the people would be lost in their ruler. His curiosity would be confined to the incidents which took place around him in the streets and temples of the great city; to the condition of noble and official families; to the omens reported in the Capitol, and the whispered intrigues of the palace. Hence Suetonius seems to think that he has written a Roman history in his series of lives of the first twelve Cæsars; and we may believe that his work was far more generally read than the broader lucubrations of Tacitus, from the fact that, a century and a half later, an emperor who deduced his lineage from the historian, provided for the annual transcription of ten copies of his

Historical importance of the prince's personal character.

Hence the biographies of Suetonius supply the place of history.

writings.¹ Books that were in general request would have stood in no need of such patronage. And though we owe, perhaps, to this exceptional care the descent of a large portion of this author's works to our own day, we still have to regret that they did not possess enough interest for the generations to which they were addressed, to be preserved entire for our instruction. On the other hand, the Cæsarean lives of Suetonius have come down to us entire, or with the loss of one or two pages only; nor have they ever, perhaps, wanted some curious readers throughout the long course of seventeen centuries.

It is plain, from the date of his birth, that Tacitus must have enjoyed opportunities of personal communication with the survivors of the darkest period of the monarchy, and have been himself a witness to the ghastly profligacy of the Neronian principate.

Popularity of
historical
writing under
Trajan.

His lofty style and thorough command of language bespeak his familiarity with men of rank and breeding, and though his birth was not illustrious, his father may have been the procurator of that name of Lower Germany recorded by the elder Pliny.² It was the position of his family, rather than his own literary merits, that led him, step by step, through the career of office to the consulship. Under Trajan all the works known positively to be his were composed. Two or three slight notices of his position at Rome, and his fame there, are preserved in the letters of Pliny;³ but whether he survived the chief he so much admired, and under whose patriotic sway he ventured to prefer his charges against the imperial monarchy, we are unable to determine.⁴ This happy reign was distinguished by the prosecution of Domitian's creatures, and of the wretches who had disgraced the period

¹ Vopiscus, in *Tacit.* 10.

² *Plin. Hist. Nat.* vii. 16.

³ *Plin. Epist.* ii. 1., iv. 15., vii. 20., ix. 23.

⁴ Bähr, *Gesch. der Röm. Liter.* ii. 130., refers to the critics who have ventured to conjecture that Tacitus survived both Pliny and Trajan, and lived to the middle of the reign of Hadrian. In the absence of any authority to this effect I think it unnecessary to examine the subject.

of blood and pride now closed for ever. All tongues were unloosed; domestic archives were unlocked; history, so long chained or gagged, awoke to freedom, and became by a sudden reaction the common utterance of the age.¹ As might be expected, there was no more ordinary subject of historical composition at this time than that which gave widest scope to the writers' passions, as well as to their rhetorical talent, the sufferings, namely, of their country. Thus C. Fannius wrote a special work on the victims of Nero, of which he left three volumes at his decease.² Titinius Capito composed an account of the *Deaths of Famous Men*, and recited each melancholy story to excited listeners among their children and friends.³ Such publications contributed to exasperate recollections already too painful to be recorded without malice or prejudice; and we may well believe that the horrors of the baleful period so recently passed away, were coloured by the painters with more than their genuine blackness. If, however, the historian traced the narrative of earlier events not from contemporary anecdote merely, but from published sources, he was bound to approach them with caution and discrimination. The official records of those times were doubtless extremely meagre, nor would they be the less open to suspicion of falsification in all important matters, such as wars, treaties, and alliances. The incidents of private oppression and suffering, which fill the foremost place in the domestic annals we possess of the empire, would

¹ Plin. *Epist.* v. 8.: "suades ut historiam scribam, et suades non solus: multi hoc me sæpe monuerant. . . . Historia quoque modo scripta delectat." Vitruvius had said the same long before: "historiæ per se tenent lectores." *Architect.* præf. lib. v.

² Plin. *Epist.* v. 5. Nero appeared to him in a dream, perused the three books deliberately, and then vanished. The author presaged from this vision that he should write no more than the emperor had read. He died, and the work remained unfinished.

³ Plin. *Epist.* viii. 12.: "scribit exitus, illustrium virorum, in iis quorundam mihi carissimorum." They referred evidently to the martyrdoms of recent tyranny. Capito venerated the images of the Bruti, the Cassii, and the Catos. *Epist.* i. 17.

be concealed or extenuated, and leave the fewest traces in public documents. Accredited history of these times there was none. From Augustus to Nero, and perhaps later, contemporary writers had shrunk from the composition of history, or their works had been seized and destroyed. But the place of grave and responsible authorities had been supplied by a mass of private anecdotes, repeated from mouth to mouth, which circulated in the depths of domestic privacy, but rarely floated to the surface, while they gathered form and consistence in the ready wit and prurient imaginations of a discontented society. Every noble family had its own dark rumours, its own versions of the circumstances attending the death or exile of its most honoured members. These stories tended to enhance the universal horror of the tyrant in whose hands the issues of life and death had lain, and the kindlier reminiscences of his friends and favourites would be overborne by the greater number and vehemence of injurious libels. From their position, from their temptations, from their own special training, or want of training, it is but too probable that Tiberius, Caius, Nero, and Domitian were really monsters of profligacy and cruelty; but if we carefully weigh the evidence against them, it is still a question how much of it could be fairly admitted in a court of justice. Most of the adverse witnesses are manifestly interested, and the influences under which Tacitus more especially wrote, as an admirer of Trajan, a partisan of the great houses, a theorist and a satirist, above all, perhaps, as an artist in composition, studious of effects in rhetoric and painting, were hostile to candour and sobriety. Roman history ended, in fact, nearly as it had begun, in the private memorials of the nobles, adapted to declamatory recitation by their flatterers and clients.

It was under great disadvantages, as regarded his materials, that Tacitus compiled the annals of the Cæsars; but there was another obstacle to a true portraiture of the times, in the want of a critical spirit, common to his age, and indeed generally prevalent

Want of a critical spirit in historical writing.

in the best periods of Roman literature. The Romans were carefully trained to precision in style; they enjoyed the use of a literary language which acknowledged but one dialect; the inflexions and syntax of the Latin tongue were the same, wherever spoken by men of education, from the Tagus to the Euphrates. It is commonly said, indeed, that the Latin language is adapted only to a limited range of subjects; but

combined with
acute criticism
on grammar.

there is surely a fallacy in this remark. The subjects to which it was actually applied within the classical period are limited in number and character, and, accordingly, classical authority is wanting for forms and phrases invented in the later times to meet the expansion of the human intellect: but with due allowance for such necessary modifications, it may be said of Latin that no vehicle of thought has, in fact, been more widely or variously employed. Latin has been, and still often is, adopted as the means of communication on themes of moral and natural science, of philosophy and religion, of mathematics and poetry, of law, history and oratory.¹ All these subjects and others may still be treated, and still are sometimes treated, throughout the civilized world, in that comprehensive dialect which was spoken by Cicero and Tacitus, which has never ceased to be read and written for 2000 years. It combines precision with terseness, strength with grace, expressiveness with fluency, beyond, as I believe, any other language; and it was upon these qualities, accordingly, that the minds of the Romans were fixed, and to the attainment of these their efforts were directed.² They be-

¹ Comp. Cicero, *De fin. bon. et mal.* i. 3.: "non est omnino hic docendi locus: sed ita sentio, Latinam linguam non modo non inopem, ut vulgo putant, sed locupletiore etiam esse quam Græcam. Quando enim nobis, vel dicam aut oratoribus bonis, aut poetis, postea quidem quam fuit quod imitarentur, ullus orationis vel copiosæ vel elegantis, ornatus defuit?"

² Seneca contrasts (*Consol. ad Polyb.* 21.) the force of the Latin with the gracefulness of the Greek language: "quamdiu steterit aut latine lingue potentia, aut Græcæ gratia;" and the contrast is no doubt generally just. It may be observed, further, that in his time the full elegance of Latin had not yet been developed by the writers of the Flavian period.

came, almost without exception, as far as their remains allow us to judge, the most accurate speakers and writers of any people in the world. No ingenuity can reduce to the logic of syntax all the eccentricities of *Æschylus* and *Thucydides* among the Greeks, while of the best of our own classics there are few perhaps that do not abound in grammatical solecisms. But the acutest criticism can hardly detect a flaw in the idioms of *Cicero* or *Livy*, *Virgil* or *Horace*, and even the most careless of the Latin poets and historians can rarely be convicted of an error in construction. It is curious, however, to observe how this habitual accuracy deserted the Romans, when they came to dwell on the substance of things instead of the outward modes of expression. To the value of a critical examination of facts they seem to have been almost insensible. Destitute of our mechanical means of verification by notes and references, the use they make of their authorities is correspondingly loose and trivial. The historian, who was not required to guard every statement by clear and direct testimonies, was easily led to read carelessly, to quote from memory, and at random. Conscious that he could not be followed to his sources, and convicted of misusing them, he could scarcely resist the temptation to pervert or gloss the truth. Falsehoods advanced for the credit of the nation or of particular families, met with ready indulgence; the habit of falsification once acquired, could not be kept within the bounds ostensibly prescribed; rhetorical amplifications slid swiftly into direct misstatements; the reputation of a great name gave currency to a lie; the critics of the age of *Quintilian*, the great age of Roman criticism, lynx-eyed in detecting the abuse of a figure of rhetoric or grammar, lacked the training required for the correction of an error in fact, or for weighing evidence. Roman criticism might be the tact of a spectator in the circus, but it was not the acumen of a judge on the tribunal.

We may ascribe perhaps to this carelessness in regard to history, the undue preference of the Romans for biography.

The preference
of the Romans
for biography.

The sketch indeed of an individual life may be worked, as we have sometimes seen in our own day, into the most elaborate picture of the events, characters, and manners of a whole generation. But a taste for biography is much more commonly, and among the Romans it seems to have been uniformly, a taste for mere personal anecdote. It resulted perhaps universally in a perversion of historical truth, a distortion of shape and proportions, if not an absolute misrepresentation of facts. Biography, however, was in favour with the Romans from the dawn of their literature, and in the Flavian period it began to assume a predominance over every other form, till it finally superseded both history and poetry. The last remains we possess of classical Latinity are the biographies of the later emperors, collected under the title of the *Augustan History*. But the chief writer of this class belongs to the period now before us, and his works are of great interest and value.

Suetonius:
Lives of the
Cæsars.

The lives of the first six Cæsars by Suetonius constitute some of the most important contributions we possess to our collection of reputed facts in history. Those of the six which followed are slighter and less attractive, the descent from the former series to the latter showing how much the author depended on written sources, and how much he was at a loss for materials when he approached his own times, the account of which was still chiefly to be gathered from hearsay. This circumstance is important for estimating the value of his book, and on the whole it enhances our idea of the reliance we may place on it. But the biographical form of composition affords too much temptation to the indolence common at the period, and to the love of effect not less common; nor does Suetonius indeed pretend to be a narrator of events. He notes the salient features of his hero's character, and illustrates them with an abundance of amusing and striking stories, referring only incidentally and obliquely, if at all, to the transactions of his public career. Hence the meagreness of the details that can now be given of the Flavian reigns, compared with the Julian and Claudian, in which

we can use the capricious portraiture of Suetonius to complete the regular narratives of Tacitus and Dion. Nor is it in the connexion of historical details only that we feel the slightness of our materials. The biographers, while fixing their eyes on the lineaments of their proper subject, overlook the general circumstances and tendencies of the age. Our view of society in the background is obstructed by the bulk of the imperial person, occupying the whole field of vision. The Lives of the Roman biographers are wholly deficient in these comprehensive pictures. They can, indeed, only be regarded as heaps of crude material amassed by labourers more or less intelligent, and disposed more or less in order for future application to a work of symmetry and grandeur. But the master-builder never came, and the materials, thus variously collected, have been for the most part dispersed and lost: the fragments now remaining in the pages of Suetonius and his successors, as well as in Victor, Xiphilin and Eutropius, can hardly furnish forth a mere frame or outline of the palace of imperial history.

The free intercourse between men of equal rank which characterized the republic, continued with little diminution under the emperors. The strength of the imperial system resided perhaps in the fact, that the nobles, the dangerous classes of the capital, who might have nursed an explosive spirit of discontent in private, could not refrain, notwithstanding their fear of spies and informers, from congregating in the baths and theatres, or in hardly less public circles at home, thus betraying their habits and thoughts without disguise to the jealous master who watched them. The spirit of biographical narration which distinguishes Roman literature, sprang, no doubt, from the gregariousness of Roman life. Reserved and self-controlled as he showed himself in the tribute of regard or reminiscence he inscribed on the tomb of his associate, the Roman indulged in all the fulness of description and anecdote in the volume he consecrated to his glory. Very many of the leading men at Rome wrote their own lives. An instinct of vanity, the

Collection of
private correspondence.

outward show of which they curbed sedulously in themselves and ridiculed in others, impelled them to leave a minute record of their deeds, coloured as they themselves wished, for posterity. Their longing for posthumous fame exceeded even their anxiety for honour or power during life. The cynical Sulla could relinquish the dictatorship, but he could not refrain from leaving his own panegyric behind him. On the whole, the chief aim of Roman literature at this period was to realize the image and character of the men who belonged to it. Biography was applicable to a few personages of distinction only; but satire and epigram were at hand to drag the most obscure to light, or to merge every personal feature in general pictures of society. For more refined tastes satisfaction might be provided by collecting the letters of men who had filled a space in the public eye, and attracted the curiosity of their own circle. The correspondence of the younger Pliny occupies, accordingly, an important place among the existing documents of the age. It gives the fullest and fairest portrait we possess of a Roman gentleman; nor indeed does any other of the ancients come so near as its writer to our conception of the gentleman in mind, breeding, and position.

The letters of
Pliny the
younger.

Pliny was born of an honourable stock, belonging to the old Cæcilian house, which was now widely extended. He was adopted by the most learned of public men, his uncle Pliny the naturalist.¹ Under these auspices he was brought up in all the learning of his times, to which he assiduously devoted himself; but his bent was rather to the public exercise of his gifts than to the accumulation of learning for its own sake, and he obtained an early footing on the ladder of office, and in the arena of forensic activity. The jurisconsult might still retain, at least

Account of
Pliny the
younger.

¹ The name of C. Plinius Cæcilius Secundus betokens a change in family nomenclature which became established about this time. At an earlier period we should have read it Plinius Cæcilianus. It seems that the longer form in — anus had now become so common that it ceased to be employed to indicate adoption.

among the highest class, something of his old character as a patron, *obliged by his nobility*, rather than a hired advocate. Pliny entered with zest into the traditional idea of this honourable relation, and if he accepted splendid fees, in acknowledgment of his services, took them always in the name of justice, and as he believed, in the cause of equity.¹ It was his pride to emulate the great pleaders of the commonwealth, in the defence of injured provincials, or the arraignment of delators; and the state of affairs under Nerva and Trajan afforded scope for the exercise of this honourable ambition.² He succeeded in turn to the chief magistracies, which he tried in vain to imagine something more than a shadow of their former importance; and he governed the province of Bithynia after the pattern recommended by the humane protector of the Sicilians, the accuser of the tyrant Verres.³ But Pliny emulated his master Cicero, though at an immeasurable distance, in the pursuit of literature also. He was proud to be known as the friend of Tacitus, and was elated with a pardonable vanity, when a provincial newly arrived conversing with him by chance on the benches of the Circus, exclaimed: *Is it Tacitus or Plinius I have the honour of addressing?*⁴

¹ The subject of the advocate's remuneration has been treated of before. I will repeat here that the clients of the older time had resented the payment of fees to their patrons as savouring too much of a tribute from the plebs to the patriciate. (Liv. xxxiv. 4.) This objection had been confirmed by the Cincian law (A. U. 549), and the advocate had been forbidden to accept prepayment for his services: but neither law nor custom prevented the gratitude of the client from overflowing in a present after the suit was over. Such was the theory of Roman legal practice at this time, and the prætor Licinius Nepos insisted on enforcing it. An amusing letter of Pliny's (*Epist.* v. 21.) describes how this interference was canvassed. Trajan confirmed it with an edict.

² Plin. *Epist.* ii. 11, 12., iii. 9., iv. 9. The writer dilates upon the part he took in pleading the cause of the Africans against Marius Priscus, and the Bæticans against Cæcilius Classicus, and again in defending Julius Bassus against the accusation of the Bithynians.

³ The letter in which Pliny gives advice to his friend about the government of a province is written evidently in imitation of Cicero's well-known epistle to Quintus. *Epist.* viii. 24.

⁴ Plin. *Ep.* ix. 23.

Pliny may at this time have been favourably known already as the author of the *Panegyric*, but the character of his friend's genius had not yet been stamped by the publication of the *Histories* or *Annals*.

The glimpses Pliny gives us of his aristocratic correspondents are not less interesting than the details of his own life

Pliny's distinguished friends and correspondents.

and habits. From him we learn almost all we know of Tacitus, who seems to have resided in lettered leisure in the city. Pliny makes us

acquainted with Silius Italicus, the refined and wealthy versifier, with Passienus Paulus, an imitator of his ancestor Propertius, with Caninius Rufus who sang the Dacian war, with Pomponius Saturninus, distinguished alike in history, oratory and poetry; and he quotes with satisfaction the praises of himself in a well-known epigram of Martial, whose compliments he rewarded with a present on his return to his native Bilbilis.¹ He introduces us to the society of the Greek rhetoricians, such as Euphrates, Isæus, and Artemidorus, who kept themselves decorously in the background among the men of letters in the capital, though it was by these accomplished strangers, probably, that the best literary circles were inspired, and by them that the arts both of eloquent speaking and graceful living were taught and recommended.² But second only to theirs was the influence of the brave and noble women, the Fannias and Arrias, the Corellias, the Calpurnias, the Celerinas, the Calvinas, who maintained in a degenerate age the antique virtues of Roman matronhood.³ Nor are there wanting in Pliny's

Interesting or amusing subjects of many of his letters.

sketches of character descriptions of another kind; as of the vanity of the wretched Regulus, the creature of Domitian, suffered by Nerva's lenity to parade

¹ Plin. *Epist.* i. 16., ii. 8., iii. 7., v. 17., ix. 22. I have mentioned a few only of the literary names in the circle of Pliny's acquaintance. The epigram of Martial on Pliny is x. 19. of the poet's collection. Plin. *Epist.* iii. 21. The whole number of the writer's correspondents is not less than 113.

² Plin. *Epist.* i. 10., ii. 3., iii. 11., and others.

³ Plin. *Epist.* iii. 11. 16., iv. 17., vi. 24., vii. 11. 19., ix. 13., and others. Calpurnia (*Epist.* iv. 19.) was Pliny's second wife.

his ill-gotten riches among better men, and even seek by villainous arts to increase them;¹ of the attack on Lartius Macedo by his own slaves, and the terrible vengeance of the law;² of the sentimental dolphin who was crossed in love on the coast of Africa;³ of the haunted house at Athens, curious as the exact counterpart of a modern ghost story, and showing how in ancient as in modern times, the instincts of supernaturalism emerged from the prevalent realism of the day.⁴ But none perhaps of these interesting letters are so valuable for the insight they give us into life and feelings as those which describe the writer's country-seats; or relate how the accomplished Vestricius Spurinna and the elder Pliny passed their time in composition or study, or how he himself diversified his literary leisure with rural amusements. Of the correspondence with Trajan I have already spoken.

The impression these letters give us of Pliny's character is extremely favourable. It represents

His correspondence with Trajan.

him a man of ability and accomplishments, of honour and humanity, kind to his slaves, considerate towards his associates, of genial habits, charmed with the attractions of domestic life, of moral simplicity and picturesque scenery, liberal in his tastes, generous in feeling. With such claims on our regard and even admiration, we may excuse the extravagance of his devotion to a virtuous prince, and his readiness to flatter those whose flattery he doubtless expected in return. Though the letters which thus amiably depict him were published by himself, and many of them written with a view to publication, they enabled us to appreciate fairly enough the writer's claim to our regard.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* i. 5., ii. 20., iv. 2., vi. 2.

² Plin. *Epist.* iii. 14. The family of slaves were put to death without waiting for the fatal result of the attack which did not follow till afterwards: "ipse paucis diebus ægre refocillatus non sine ultionis solatio decessit, ita vivus vindicatus ut occisi solent."

³ Plin. *Epist.* ix. 33.

⁴ Plin. *Epist.* vii. 27.: "velim scire, esse aliquid phantasmata . . . putes:—Ego ut esse credam in primis eo ducor, quod audio accidisse Curtio Rufo."

Pliny's letters give us our nearest view of the ideas and habits of the Roman aristocracy, and they show in a remark-

able manner how finely the speculative opinions of the day were actually shaded into one another.

Mutual approximation of the sects of philosophy. The Stoics and Epicurians.

When we read of the antagonistic tenets of the Stoics and Epicureans, and hear, not from poets

and satirists only, but from grave historians, such as Tacitus, of the strong features which marked their consistent professors, when we know that Vespasian and Domitian issued special edicts against the disciples of Chrysippus and Cato, and are led to suppose that these men were in some way actively hostile to the government, it is not without surprise that we remark in the pages of Pliny now before us, how little distinctive there seems really to have been in the temper and notions of the Stoics compared with other educated citizens. At all times, under every form of government, men will be divided into those who take life seriously and try to follow a rule and embody an idea, and the larger number who swim with the stream and merely seek to extract enjoyment, without too great an effort, from the position in which they find themselves. It is probable, indeed, that in the darkest ages, and under the worst tyrants, this difference of character was more prominent, and did actually effect some outward severance between the members of the Roman aristocracy; but undoubtedly, as soon as the pressure of persecution was relaxed, the profession of Stoicism dwindled to a few trifling formalities, and it was again by natural temper, not by creeds and tenets, that men were distinguished from one another.

The letters of Pliny abound in instances of self-murder, a practice which at this time may almost be dignified with the name of a national usage. Nothing, however,

Prevalence of suicide at this period.

would be more erroneous than to suppose that this was a principle of the Stoics, or was the distinguished practice of the sect. Suicide, in the view of their professed teachers, was barely excusable in the last resort,

when there plainly remained no other escape from a restraint which denied to man the object of his existence. Cato persuaded himself that he could not serve his own moral being under the rule of a despot ; but this was allowed, even on his own principles, to be a perverse and extravagant view ; and his example, effective as it proved in gaining imitators, was followed by the Epicurean Cassius as devoutly as by the Stoic Brutus. From that time, while the practice of self-immolation became more and more frequent, it seems to have been more commonly affected by the selfish and wilful men of pleasure, than by the austere votaries of virtue under whatever nominal profession. But the true and consistent disciples of the Porch, whether they protested openly, at all hazards, against the tyranny of the times, or constrained themselves to the public service in sullen submission to it, refused to flee from the bondage in which they lay by the subterfuge of the coward and the voluptuary. We need not pass too austere a judgment on the sick and aged who thus courted present relief from suffering, and even made their escape from a painful existence with a show of dignity and fortitude. But we must guard ourselves against confounding such ordinary mortals with the genuine patriots and sages, who proved themselves generally superior to this morbid intemperance. Pliny, indeed, betrays a certain admiration for the courage of these persons, many of whom were of the number of his own friends ; but we may believe that the true philosophers, such as Cornutus, Thræsea and Helvidius, would have held them in little honour.

Suicide not a principle of the Stoics.

The fashion, for such it evidently became, was the result of satiety and weariness, or, at best, of false reasoning ; but the fact that suicide was never so rife as under the beneficent sway of Trajan, shows that it was by no means the resource of political indignation, chafing against its prison-bars, which it has been so commonly represented.

Nor practised as an escape from tyranny.

Nor is it the habit of suicide itself that marks the age and the people so strikingly, as the mode in which it is accom-

Suicide of
Corellius
Rufus.

plished, the publicity, the solemnity, and even the ostentation that attend it. *I have just suffered a great loss*, writes Pliny: *my friend Corellius Rufus is dead, and by his own act, which embitters my sorrow. No death is so much to be lamented as one that comes not in the course of fate or nature. . . . Corellius, indeed, was led to this resolve by the force of reason, which holds with philosophers the place of necessity, although he had many motives for living, a sound conscience, a high reputation and influence; not to mention a daughter, a wife, a grandson, sisters, and true friends besides. But he was tortured by so protracted a malady, that his reasons for death outweighed all these advantages. For three and thirty years, as I have heard him declare, he had suffered from gout in the feet. The disorder was hereditary with him. . . . In the vigour of life he had checked it by sobriety and restraint; when it grew worse with increasing years, he had borne it with fortitude and patience. I visited him one day, in Domitian's time, and found him in the greatest suffering; for the disease had now spread from the feet through all his limbs. His slaves quitted the room, for such was their habit whenever an intimate friend came to see him; and such was his wife's practice also, though she could have kept any secret. After casting his eyes around, he said, Why do you suppose it is that I continue so long to endure these torments? I would survive the ruffian just one day. Had his body been as strong as his mind, this wish he would have effected with his own hand. God granted it, however, and when he felt that he should die a free man, he burst through all the lesser ties that bound him to life. The malady, which he had tried so long to relieve by temperance, still increased: at last his firmness gave way. Two, three, four days passed, and he had refused all food. His wife, Hispulla, sent our friend Geminus to me, with the melancholy news that her husband had resolved to die, and would not be dissuaded by her prayers or her daughter's: I alone could prevail upon him. I flew to him. I had almost reached the spot, when Atticus met me*

from Hispulla, to say that even I could not now prevail, so fixed had become his determination. To his physician, indeed, on food being offered to him, he had said, I have decided; an expression which makes me the more regret him, as I the more admire him. I think to myself, What a friend, what a man have I lost! He had completed, indeed, his sixty-seventh year, an advanced age even for the most robust: yes, I know it. He has escaped from his long-protracted illness: I know it. He has died, leaving his dearest friends behind him, and the state, which was still dear to him, in prosperity. This, too, I know. Nevertheless, I lament his death, no less than if he were young and vigorous; I lament it—do not think me weak in saying so—on my own account. For I have lost, yes, I have lost a witness of my own life, a guide, a master. In short, I will say to you, as I said to my friend Calvisius, I fear I shall myself live more carelessly for the future.¹

Another letter, of similar character, relates to the death of Silius Italicus, the patrician, the consular, the poet and man of letters. Pliny hears that this noble personage had starved himself in his villa at Neapolis. *The cause of his death was ill health; for he suffered from an incurable tumour, the irksomeness of which determined him to hasten his end with unshaken resolution.*² Of another distinguished contemporary, the juriconsult Aristo, the same writer re-

Of Silius
Italicus.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* i. 12.

² Plin. *Epist.* iii. 7. The writer speaks with great respect of this man, whose habits were not unlike his own. But Silius had incurred the charge of subservience to Nero: "læserat famam suam sub Nerone; credebatur sponte accusasse." He had recovered his character by his honest bearing under Vitellius, and had gained approbation for his conduct in the government of Asia: "maculam veteris industriæ laudabili otio abluerat. Fuit inter principes civitatis sine potentia, sine invidia. Salutabatur, colebatur: multumque in lectulo jacens cubiculo semper, non ex fortuna frequenti, doctissimis sermonibus dies transigebat, cum a scribendo vacaret. Scribebat carmina majore cura quam ingenio." Here Pliny seems to refer not to the epic poem of the "Punica," written long before, but to the copies of verses Silius was in the habit of composing in his old age.

cords, that he had desired him, with other intimate friends, to demand of the physicians whether his malady was really incurable; for, if so, he would manfully terminate his own existence. Were there, however, any reasonable prospect of relief, he would endure it with fortitude, however obstinate and tedious; for so he had promised his wife and daughter; and he felt, moreover, under an obligation to his friends, not to frustrate their wishes by a voluntary death, if there were any hope for him. *This, says Pliny, I consider, more than usually difficult and praiseworthy. For to rush upon death with impetuosity and ardour is common to many; but to deliberate about it, and discuss the arguments for it and against it, and live or die accordingly, is worthy of a great mind. And the doctors, it seems, do give us hopes. May the Gods confirm them, and relieve me at least from this anxiety, which, when I am rid of, I shall return to my Laurentine villa, to my papers and tablets and literary leisure.*¹

The resolution of the men was rivalled by that of the women also, and was supported apparently, in either case, more by natural force of character, and innate daring, than by any training in speculative philosophy. The illustrious deed of Arria, the wife of Pætus, who, when her husband was sentenced for conspiring with Scribonianus, gave herself the first blow, and handed him the dagger, with the words, *It is not painful*, was, it seems, no act of sudden impulse, but the accomplishment of a deliberate resolution not to survive him. While his fate was yet doubtful, she had intimated this intention to her relatives, and they had tried in vain to dissuade her. To Thræsea, her son-in-law, who had asked whether she would wish her own daughter thus to sacrifice herself in the event of his decease. *Yes, assuredly*, she had replied, *if she shall have lived as long and as well with you, as I have lived with my Pætus.* When accordingly they kept a stricter watch over her, to prevent the execution of her design, she

Suicide prevailed among the women.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* i. 22.

had told them that their precautions were fruitless. *You can make me die shockingly*, she had said, *but you cannot prevent my dying*: and therewith she had leapt from her seat, and dashed her head violently against the wall. Stunned and bruised, she exclaimed on recovering, *I told you that I would find a way to death, however painful, if you refused me an easy one.*¹ The admiration Pliny expresses for this fierce-minded creature, whose memory was treasured in the hearts of her family, shows in what honour the suicide even of women was held, in the dislocation of the true moral sense among the Romans of the period.²

Had indeed the feeling which prompted these acts of self-sacrifice been the result merely of speculative opinions about virtue and duty, it would have caused little uneasiness to the tyrants. But indicating, as it really did, a contempt of life, and recklessness of personal consequences, it might alarm them with

This proneness to suicide not the result of speculative opinions.

a sense of their own insecurity. Hence the distress of Tiberius at the fatal resolution of Cocceius Nerva; hence the visit, the enquiries, the intreaties to abstain from it, and lastly, the avowal that the suicide of a distinguished guest of the palace, with no obvious motive, would be injurious to the prince's reputation.³ The emperors readily imagined that the men who held their own lives in so little estimation might at any moment cast them on the die of revolt or assassination, and they conceived that there was no way to disarm such fanatical hostility, but to divert it from the contemplation of high and generous objects by the grossest

¹ Plin. *Epist.* iii. 16. Compare another notable case of perverted principle (vi. 24.). A couple of mature years, long married, dwelt in a villa on the banks of the lake Larius. The man suffered from a distressing malady: the wife assured herself that it was incurable, told him that there was nothing for him but to kill himself, promised that she would not desert him, tied herself to him, and tumbled with him into the water.

² A painful illustration of this proneness to suicide in women occurs in the case of Paulina the wife of Seneca. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 60.

³ Tacitus, *Ann.* vi. The story has been already referred to in chapter xlv. of this history.

dissipation. This was the snare into which the discontented nobles too easily fell. They escaped from the fatigue of public affairs, which had lost their redeeming interest, in a round of sensual, or at best of idle pleasures, and cloaked their dereliction of duty as citizens under the name of philosophy, which should have taught them another lesson. They made it the aim of their lives to cultivate inward satisfaction, a good conscience, as they sententiously entitled it, by keeping jealously out of sight those worthy ends of existence which, under their circumstances, were difficult, perhaps impossible to attain. Their eclectic philosophy, whether it took the name of the Porch, the Garden, or the Academy, was generally the parade of rhetorical axioms on the uncertainty or vanity of life, and the superiority of the truly wise to all earthly distresses, such as vex the souls of ordinary mortals.¹

This aping of the ancient wisdom was the common fashion of the day among the polished classes of society; but it might be combined with almost any mode of life, such as in many cases little deserved association with it. The increasing splendour of the shows and contests, gymnastic or literary, encouraged by the patronage of the prince himself, began to fascinate the Roman magnate, who at an earlier period would have abandoned these frivolous enjoyments to the Greeks, their inventors and introducers.² Both Pliny and Tacitus attended the spectacles of the circus, which Cicero and even Seneca would

Voluptuousness and coarseness of the times.

¹ Comp. Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 2. 129. :

"Nos vilis turba caducis
Deservire bonis, semperque optare parati,
Spargimur in casus; celsa tu mentis ab arce
Despicias errantes, humanaque gaudia rides."

But the sage, who thus despised all worldly gratifications, looked down upon the world from the fairest paradise in the Surrentine hills.

² Lucan, *Phars.* vii. 270. :

"Gravis delecta juvenis
Gymnasiis aderit, studioque ignava palæstræ."

have regarded as a weakness, perhaps as a disgrace.¹ But such recreations were innocent compared with the gross sensualities in which the great too often indulged, with the words of Plato and Chrysippus on their lips.² The pleasures of the bath and table attained a solemn recognition from the men of letters and philosophy. The revived attractions of the camp and military service exercised also a marked effect on the forms of society. The coarse licence of the tent or the trenches penetrated into the halls and gardens of the Italian noble. Beneath the loose flowing garb of the forum a moral restraint had been concealed, which was completely thrown off under the pressure of the cuirass, and to which, after a long period of indulgence abroad, it was difficult again to submit at home. The literature of the times suggests to us pictures of the rude presumption of tribunes and centurions, who corrupted the tone of polite society in which they affected to mingle on equal terms. Trajan himself, who had passed most of his days among soldiers, had his carouses and boon companions, and the fashion set by princes has more influence on the mass of their subjects than the example of recluse philosophers. From this period we discover a marked decline in the intellectual character of the Roman people. Though the names of historians, poets, and orators continue to abound in our records, they become little better than empty sounds; for their works have almost wholly perished, and we can only account for this general disappearance by the trifling estimation they retained after the lapse of a single generation. But the Flavian period still did honour to the ennobling influence of letters. The extent to which many of

The tone of society corrupted by the soldiery.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* ix. 23. Tacitus attended the Circensian games. I have referred in chapter xli. to the unfavourable opinions of Cicero (*Tusc. Disp.* ii. 17.) and Seneca (*De brev. vit.* 13.).

² Juvenal ii. 4. :

“Quamquam plena omnia gypso
Chrysippi invenies.”

Comp. Martial, i. 25., vii. 58. Quintil. *Instit. Orat.* proœm. 1.

the noblest citizens were influenced by a genuine taste for acquiring knowledge is striking and affecting. It shows how strongly, in default of the highest objects of human interest, of religious aspirations and political ambition, all the powers of the mind may be engrossed by any subject which deals with thoughts and feelings common to our nature. Thus it was also that composition, still confined as strictly as ever to the highest ranks, became among them the employment of many. Though the greater number of these lordly scribblers may never have given their productions to the public, nor even recited them to their own acquaintances, the habit of reading, extracting, and annotating seems to have spread widely, and to have formed a regular part of existence throughout a distinguished circle.

The manner in which Vestricius Spurinna, an active public officer in the prime of life, a diligent student in old age,

Habits of the more refined and intelligent among the nobles. Example of Vestricius Spurinna.

spent the days of his dignified retirement, may be noted as an example of the habits of his class. *I know not that I ever passed a pleasanter time, says Pliny, than lately with Spurinna ; there is indeed no man I should so much wish to resemble in my own old age, if I am permitted to grow old. Nothing can be finer than such a mode of life, For my part, I like a well-ordered course of life, particularly in old men, just as I admire the regular order of the stars. Some amount of irregularity and even of confusion is not unbecoming in youth ; but everything should be regular and methodical with old men, who are too late for labour, and in whom ambition would be indecent. This regularity Spurinna strictly observes, and his occupations, trifling as they are (trifling, that is, were they not performed day by day continually), he repeats as it were in a circle. At dawn he keeps his bed ; at seven he calls for his slippers ; he then walks just three miles, exercising his mind at the same time with his limbs. If friends are by, he discourses seriously with them ; if not, he hears a book read ; and so he does sometimes even when friends are present, if it be not disagreeable to them. He then seats himself, and*

more reading follows, or more conversation, which he likes better. By and by he mounts his carriage, taking with him his wife, a most admirable woman, or some friends, as myself, for instance, the other day. What a noble, what a charming tête-à-tête! how much talk of ancient things; what deeds, what men you hear of! what noble precepts you imbibe, though indeed he refrains from all appearance of teaching. Returning from a seven-mile drive, he walks again one mile; then sits down or reclines with the stylus in his hand. For he composes lyrical pieces with elegance both in Greek and Latin. Very soft, sweet and merry they are, and their charm is enhanced by the decorum of the writer's own habits. When the hour of the bath is announced, that is, at two in summer, at three in winter, he strips and takes a turn in the sun, if there is no wind. Then he uses strong exercise for a considerable space at tennis; for this is the discipline with which he struggles against old age. After the bath he takes his place at table, but puts off eating for a time, listening in the meanwhile to a little light and pleasant reading. All this time his friends are free to do as he does, or anything else they please. Supper is then served, elegant and moderate, on plain but ancient silver. He uses Corinthian bronzes too, and admires without being foolishly addicted to them. Players are often introduced between the courses, that the pleasures of the mind may give a relish to those of the palate. He trenches a little on the night, even in summer; but no one finds the time long, such are his kindness and urbanity throughout. Hence now, at the age of sixty-seven, he both hears and sees perfectly; hence his frame is active and vigorous; he has nothing but old age to remind him to take care of himself. . . . Such, he adds, is the mode of life to which I look forward for myself, and on which I will enter with delight, as soon as advancing years allow me to effect a retreat. Meanwhile I am harassed by a thousand troubles, in which Spurinna is my consolation, as he has ever been my example. For he too, as long as it became him, discharged

*duties, bore offices, governed provinces; and great was the labour by which he earned his relaxation.*¹

Such a mode of life was probably not uncommon, and implied no special devotion to literary occupation. Of the true

The true man
of letters.
Pliny the elder.

man of letters we have an eminent and conspicuous example in the elder Pliny; for the public functions this prodigy of assiduous industry discharged did not prevent him from reading and writing more unremittingly and more copiously than perhaps any of his contemporaries. *He was a man, says his nephew emphatically, of quick parts, of incredible industry, and the least possible sleep.*² *From the twenty-third of August he began to study at midnight, and through the winter he continued to rise at one, or at the latest at two in the morning, often at twelve.*³ *Before daybreak he used to go to the emperor; for he too worked at night. Thence he betook himself to his official duties. On returning home he again gave what time remained to his studies. After taking food, which in the morning was light and digestible, as in the olden time, he would often in summer recline in the sun, if he had leisure. A book was then read to him, on which he made notes, or extracted from it. He read nothing he did not extract from. For he would say there was no book so bad you could not get some good from it. After his sunning he generally took a cold bath; then a slight repast, and a very little sleep. Then, as if beginning a new day, he studied till supper time. During supper a book was read, and notes made on it as it went on. I remember one of his friends once stopping the reader, who had pronounced a word ill, and making him re-*

¹ Plin. *Ep.* iii. 1.

² Comp. the elder Pliny's account of himself, *Hist. Nat.* præf.: "occupatus officiis, subcesivisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis." Sleep he counted among the infirmities of nature: "profecto enim vita vigilia est."

³ Plin. *Epist.* iii. 5.: *lucubrare Vulcanalibus* (x. Kal. Sept. i. e. Aug. 23.) *incipiebat, non auspicandi causa, sed studenti, statim a nocte multa.* "Lucubrare" is to study by torch-light. This was done once on the morning of the Vulcanalia "auspicandi, i. e. boni ominis causa," but the practice not usually continued. Pliny persevered.

peat it. Did you not understand him? said my uncle. He admitted that he had. Why then did you stop him? We have lost ten more lines by this interruption. Such a miser was he of his time. He rose from supper in summer time by daylight; in winter before seven in the evening, as regularly as if constrained by law. This was his mode of life in the midst of his official labours, and in the turmoil of the city. In the country he exempted only his bathing time from study. I mean the actual use of the bath itself, for while he was being rubbed and dried he would listen to reading or himself dictate. In travelling he considered himself free from every other care, and gave himself entirely to study. He kept a scribe at his side with a book and tablets, whose hands in winter were armed with gloves, that even the cold weather might not rob him of a moment; and with this view he used even at Rome to be carried in a litter. I remember his rebuking me for taking a walk. You might have managed, he said, not to lose those hours. For he considered all time lost which was not given to study. It was by this intense application that he completed so great a number of books, and left me besides a hundred and sixty volumes of Extracts, written on both sides of the leaf, and in the minutest hand, so as to double the amount . . . Would you not think, on remembering how much he read and wrote, that he had had no part in affairs, nor enjoyed the friendship of a prince? And again, when you hear how much time he devoted to business, would you not suppose that he neither read nor wrote at all? . . . It makes me smile when people call me studious, for idle indeed am I compared with him.

The habits indeed of the younger Pliny admitted of a greater variety of interests, and the practice of forensic speaking required him to mix more freely in society, and to take a larger share in the ordinary transactions of life. During part of the year he resided at Rome; for some months annually he enjoyed the combination of town and country in his suburban villa at Laurentum, whence he could come to the city as often as

Mode of life of
Pliny the
younger.

business required. But he sometimes indulged himself with a more complete change of scene among the hills of Etruria, or on the banks of the Larius, in his own native region.¹ In the country he led, according to his own account, rather an idle life, amusing himself with field sports; but there is something still more pleasing in the kindly feeling with which he interests himself in the concerns of his neighbours and fellow-townsmen, providing for the maintenance of their orphan children, erecting a temple at his own expense in a country village, and placing in the sanctuary of his own native town a Corinthian bronze, too choice in material and workmanship for his own modest altar.² As a man high in office, and a popular advocate, he had acquired large means, and his villas, notwithstanding the professed moderation of his tastes and expenses, were on a scale inferior perhaps to few. The minute descriptions he has left of them are among our most precious documents; and may aid in completing our conceptions of Roman domestic life.

Magnificence in the exterior of private dwellings is generally a late product of civilization, and the Greeks and Romans, who long disregarded it entirely, attached to the last but a secondary interest to it. To the façades of their temples they gave all the splendour and elegance they could command, for the temple was the visible token of the deity, and the homage paid him by his worshippers was conducted in front of his sanctuary, while the interior cell in which his image was shrouded was for the most part low, dark, and narrow. But in their private residences this usage was originally reversed. At home they displayed their taste and luxury in the decorations of their interiors, while in their exterior character they regarded convenience only. The portico was indeed a necessary ad-

Magnificence
of the dwellings
of the nobility.

The Roman
principle of
adorning the
exterior of
their temples,
but the interior
of their
dwellings.

¹ Besides his Laurentinum and Tuscum and at least two seats on the lake of Como, Pliny possessed country houses at Tusculum, Præneste and Tibur. *Epist.* v. 6. 45.

² Plin. *Epist.* iii. 4. 6.; iv. 1.; vii. 18.; x. 12. Comp. ix. 39.

junct to the temple; its noble span was first invented for use rather than for ornament, to shelter the worshippers who could not be admitted within the sanctuary, and this necessity produced in the progress of the art the most striking and sumptuous features of ancient architecture. But the grand columnar vestibule was not required for the dwelling-house, and accordingly formed no part in the ordinary elevation of a Roman villa. While, on the other hand, the temple was a simple edifice of limited dimensions, however handsome in its proportions, the patrician palace extended over an indefinite area, and comprized an endless variety of parts, which it would have taxed the genius of the greatest architects to combine in one harmonious design. It does not appear indeed that any such attempt was made. The palace of the Cæsars was the creation of a succession of ambitious builders, who threw out long colonnades in various directions, connecting hall with hall, and tower with tower, without plan or symmetry, with no view to unity of appearance or architectural proportion. Such was the Golden House of Nero; and hence the fitness of the common comparison of a palace to a city, a comparison sufficiently just among the Romans, but which would hardly occur under our modern habits. The emperor alone could command so vast a space within the walls of the capital; but in the country many a wealthy citizen indulged his ideas of comfort and magnificence on a scale perhaps not less extravagant, covering broad tracts of land with apartments for every purpose of life, connected with porticos and open cloisters, and enclosing plots of garden ground, or planted at the end of marble terraces or alleys of box and planes, wherever a favourite view could be commanded, whether near or distant. The Roman villa, in the later acceptation of the term, the luxurious summer retreat rather than the residence on the farm which it originally signified, was placed either on the sea-shore or among the hills, for the sake of coolness; and its arrangements were chiefly devised with a view to

Vast extent of
the Roman
palaces.

personal comfort. The Laurentine of Pliny
 Pliny's Laurentine villa. faced the Tyrrhene sea, and extended in one direction only, parallel to the coast. It consisted of numerous rooms, of various forms and dimensions, and designed for various uses, united by open galleries. Most of these chambers commanded, as may be supposed, a sea view, and enjoyed nearly a southern aspect. Some were circular, and looked forth in all directions; others semi-circular, and screened only from the north; others again excluded the prospect of the water, and almost its noises; some faced west, some east, to be used at different seasons, or even different times of the day.¹ Behind this long line of buildings, the outward appearance of which is nowhere indicated, but which seems in no part to have risen above the ground-floor, lay gardens, terraces, and covered ways for walking and riding; and among these were placed also some detached apartments, such as we might call summer-houses; while still further in the rear rose the primeval pine-woods of the Latian coast, which supplied the baths with fuel, and formed a chief recommendation of the locality. The Tuscan villa of the same proprietor seems to have been more extensive, and even more elaborately constructed.

Pliny's Tuscan villa.

Pliny's description of it is remarkable for the sense it shows of the picturesque, and the intimation it affords, that not himself only, but others of his class, partook in no slight degree of that enjoyment of natural scenery which is the special boast of our own age and country. Pliny takes great pains to impress on his correspondent the sylvan beauties of the spot, the wide range of plain and meadow stretching before it to the Tiber, the slope of leafy hills on the skirt of which it lay, the massy amphitheatre of the Apennines behind it; and it is not till he has expatiated with

¹ Hume, in his *Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations*, remarked that, "The buildings of the Romans were very like the Chinese houses at this day, where each apartment is separated from the rest, and rises no higher than a single story;" a description which has been amply confirmed by the accounts of the imperial summer palace beyond the walls of Pekin.

warmth on these sentimental attractions that he refers to the eligibility of the site for its material conveniences, the abundance of wood, the fertility of the soil, the serviceableness of the river, navigable in winter and spring for barges, to convey its produce to the Roman market. The account of the edifice itself is similar to that of the Laurentinum, though even more complicated in its details. It is approached by a long portico, leading to an Atrium or central hall, such as formed the nucleus of the town-residence; but there the likeness ends, for whereas in the house at Rome all the living-rooms open upon the atrium, and lie compactly arranged within the four outer walls, in the villa almost every apartment is substantially independent of the rest and only slightly connected with them by suites of open galleries. The Tuscan seems to have abounded also in gardens and plantations, its situation being better adapted for such luxuries than the sea-shore. But neither in this case is there any mention of the exterior appearance, nor any hint that the reader might be expected to derive pleasure from the description of it. It is evident that an architectural design did not enter into the ideas either of Nero, when he flaunted over Rome with his palace of palaces, or of the elegant master of the patrician villa by the sea or on the hill-side.¹

We possess another description of a villa, less particular indeed, but hardly less vivid, in a very animated poem of Statius. The pleasure-house of the noble Pollius occupied the finest spot for such a luxury that The Surrentine villa of Pollius. all the Roman dominions could offer.² It stood on the summit of a low promontory, immediately west of the little town of Surrentum, and looked in a northerly direction across the Campanian Crater to Neapolis. On the right and left the shore was indented by two small bays, in one of which the

¹ Plin. *Epist.* ii. 17., v. 6.

² Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 2. The "villa Surrentina of Pollius" may be compared throughout with iii. 1., the "Hercules Surrentinus," and i. 3., the "villa Tiburtina of Vopiscus." Comp. also, on a smaller scale, the villa on the Janiculum, Martial, iv. 64., and again x. 30.

stranger who came by sea from Naples,—such is the poet's description of his own arrival,—ran his bark upon the beach. On the margin of the water he encountered a bath-house, furnished with double chambers for the salt element and the fresh; for at this point a stream, descending from the hills, made its way into the sea.¹ A little fane with a statue of Neptune, fronted and defied the billows, while another of Hercules faced the land, and seemed to guard the tranquil retreat.² Statius climbed the hill, under the shelter of a colonnade, which led direct to the villa, and reminded him of the ancient glories of the covered way which still scaled the ascent from Lechæum to Corinth. The villa itself occupied a platform, and was divided, like those before described, into a long series of chambers, facing the bay of Naples, and commanding the varied line of coast from Stabiæ to Misenum, with the island cliffs of Inarime and Prochyta. Of these chambers some opened to the south, and looked landwards, and in these the resonance of the surges was never heard.³ These apartments, and the terraces, open or covered, which connected them, were adorned with painting and sculpture in marble, and in bronze more precious than gold, the effigies of warriors, poets and philosophers. They were decorated,

¹ Stat. *Sylv.* ii. 2.:

“Gratia prima loci gemina testudine fumant
Balnea, et e terris occurrit dulcis amaro
Nympha mari.”

² Stat. l. c.: “gaudet gemino sub numine portus. Hic servat terras, hic sævis fluctibus obstat.” The Greeks, and their imitators the Romans, studied appropriateness in the choice of statues for particular localities. Thus Neptune was suited to a temple or grotto on the sea-shore; Narcissus to a fountain, &c. Pausan. ii. 25. 4.; Callistratus, 5. The people of Alabanda committed a solecism in taste when they placed statues of advocates in their gymnasium, and of Wrestlers, &c., in their forum. Vitruv. iii. 5.; see Feuerbach, *Der Vatican. Apollo*, p. 179.

³ Stat. l. c.:

“Hæc videt Inarimen, illi Prochyta aspera paret . . .
Hæc pelagi clamore fremunt, hæc tecta sonoros
Ignorant fluctus, terræque silentia malunt.”

moreover, with variegated slabs, much loved by the opulent and magnificent, from the quarries of Egypt, Libya and Phrygia.¹ The platform occupied by the house and its precincts was artificially prepared for them by scarping the cliffs and levelling the inequalities of the ground, by clearing woods in one place, by planting groves in another, till the whole might be compared to the creation of an Amphion or an Orpheus.² This much-laboured site was sheltered from the winds which eddied from the land by the mountain range here projecting from the Campanian Apennines, and gradually descending to the promontory of Minerva. The slopes were planted with vines, celebrated for their strong and generous produce, and were lost at last in level corn-fields, which extended to the very edge of the waters, and glistened in the sun with the spray of the billows.³

But with whatever rapture the poet expatiates on the prospect from these terraces and windows, he has no word for the view of the villa itself from the bay or landing-place, the view on which his own eye would naturally rest as he crossed the water from Neapolis. In a modern description of such a lordly dwelling, the elevation of the house would be the first object of interest to the spectator, and its praise the most acceptable compliment to its owner. Such is the antagonism between ancient and modern feeling on these subjects. Our noblest palaces are often purposely placed where the prospect is confined to the depths of the woods attached to them. We complain that the ancients betray little sense of the picturesque in landscape; but with us too it is but a recent practice to give our houses the command of an extensive

Considerations
on the taste of
the Romans in
building, &c.

¹ Stat. l. c.:

"Hic Graiis penitus desecta metallis Saxa."

² Stat. l. c.:

"Et tu saxa moves, et te nemora alta sequuntur."

³ Stat. l. c.:

"Quid nunc ruris opea, pontoque novalia dicam
Injecta, et madidas Baccheo nectare rupes."

survey; our fathers rather chose secure and sheltered spots for building, and delighted more in the palatial front, and towering elevation, as beheld from without, than in the varied scenes of nature which opened on the spectator from within. For this discrepancy motives might readily be discovered in differences of climate and even of national disposition. The Romans retained to the last a certain simplicity of taste in limiting their views to their own domestic comfort and enjoyment, rather than soliciting admiration from strangers. In their dress as well as in their buildings, in the general tenor of their social habits, they attach more importance to personal convenience than to the judgment of their neighbours. Fleeing from the painful glare of the Italian sun, they buried themselves in vaults beneath the ground, where no other eyes could witness their indulgences. Such are the chambers still remaining beneath the surface of the Palatine, which belonged, as is thought, to the imperial residence; such were the apartments, deeply sunk in the basement of the Baths of Titus, whence the masterpieces of ancient art were drawn forth, never before revealed to the view of the multitude. The Nymphæa, or bath-houses of the emperors and nobles on the margin of the Alban Lake, were sheltered from every gaze, though doubtless they were decorated internally with splendour and voluptuousness. In quest of coolness and the grateful breeze, the patrician thrust his villa upon the bosom of the lake or ocean, and remains have been detected, at the bottom of the lucent lake of Nemi, of a wooden ship or raft of vast dimensions, whereon Trajan, or possibly Tiberius, constructed a retreat, furnished with every luxury, and supplied by pipes with the living waters of the mountains.¹

Floating palace
on the lake of
Nemi.

¹ Marchi (*Della Architettura Militare*, 1599) relates how he examined with the diving bell the sunken palace, as he calls it, in the lake of Nemi. Some fragments have been raised, and are now preserved in the museums at Rome. There is no apparent ground, however, for his conjecture that this structure was the work of Trajan. The only traces of inscription about it record the name of Tiberius. See Brotier's Notes on his *Supplement to Tacitus*; and Gell's *Topography of Rome*, &c., ii. 113.

The view of society presented to us in the pages of Pliny, of Statius, and even of Quintilian, is impressed with a character of feeble elegance, such as we commonly connect with the decline of a refined civilization. The voluptuous indolence in which generation after generation has been steeped, seems at last to enervate the fibre of the nation; the virtues and the vices of a decaying society betray equally the departure of the energy and elasticity which marked its lusty maturity. The age produces no more great deeds, nor great thoughts; its very crimes are stunted. The men must be measured by a lower standard, yet fewer than of old will be found to rise above it. That such was the tendency of the times cannot be denied: the growth of human nature must ever be dwarfed by the withdrawal of the sun of liberty. The tyranny of custom and fashion was more effective, perhaps, in reducing men to a vulgar equality in tastes, habits, and opinions, than even the tyranny of a despotic administration. The progress of such a decline had been inevitable, at least from the age of the Scipios. But the movement had been hitherto slow, and we must not be led by fallacious appearances to exaggerate it. If we remark the absence of great events and prominent personages from the epoch before us, the defect may partly be ascribed to the meagreness of its historical remains. In Trajan himself, in Agricola, in Thrasea and Virginus, we catch glimpses at least of men, who, if painted at full length in their genuine colours, might be found no less interesting specimens of human nature than any of the heroes of the republic. What is lacking however in history, may be supplied in part from the writings of two at least among the most conspicuous of our public teachers. Tacitus and Juvenal are both of them thoroughly manly; they are hearty in their loves and hates, clear in their perceptions, vigorous in their language, consistent in their estimates of good and evil, as men might be who lived in the healthiest and most bracing

Decline of energy, and disappearance of salient features of character among the Romans.

Exceptional manliness of Trajan, Agricola, and others.

Manliness of Tacitus and Juvenal.

of social atmospheres. The strength and independence of their minds might befit the early manhood of a people destined to effect great moral conquests. The errors, even of Tacitus and Juvenal, were the most remote from those of social decrepitude, which is generally marked by laxity of moral judgment, indifference to national honour, and sickly sentiment. Of the estimation in which the historian was held we have some account in the letters of Pliny; and though we have no token of Juvenal's reception among his contemporaries, we know that even within the classical period his satires became the theme of annotators and expositors. We may conclude that the age which could appreciate writers so true in moral feeling, and so bold in expressing it, was not destitute of other men of the same stamp, men both of energy and sensibility. The picture of society they drew is indeed sufficiently frightful; nor can we question its general fidelity. But the criminals they lash were at least no milksops in crime, no fribbles in vice. Their tyrants and hypocrites, their sensualists and parasites, are all cast in the strong mould of the Roman free-state. They are genuine countrymen of Catilina and his desperadoes, of Piso and Verres, of Fulvia and Sempronia.

Tacitus and Juvenal may be appropriately compared for the shrewdness with which they analyse motives, and the fierceness of their indignation, though the one is compact, concentrated, and even reserved in the expression of his passion, the other vehement, copious and declamatory. Both have the same definite point of view, as Roman moralists and patriots. But, of the two, Tacitus is what has been called the *best hater*; he is the blinder in his prejudices, the least various in his sympathies with human nature. Tacitus is an instance of what we regret sometimes to meet with among men of ability and experience, the increase with advancing years of bitterness, narrowness, and intolerance. Like our own political philosopher Burke, Tacitus grows more acrid, more morbid in temper, even to the last. Little as we

Comparison
between Tacitus
and Juvenal.

The bitterness
of Tacitus increases
as he advances in
years.

know of his life, we may trace the deepening shade in his works, though we have reason to believe that he had not even the excuse of personal or political disappointment. In the *Dialogue on Oratory*, his earliest utterance, he displays a just sense of the evil tendencies of his day; but his rebuke to the spirit of the age is tempered with gentleness and reserve, and shows at least a disposition to appreciate every element of good. But these sympathies speedily evaporate. The *Agricola*, while professedly a panegyric, is in fact a scarcely disguised satire. The praises of the hero are two-edged, and every stroke dealt in his honour recoils with a back-handed blow on the necks of his contemporaries. The *Histories* abound in keen discrimination of crimes and vices, and in burning sarcasms on wickedness in high places; yet even in the *Histories*, the dark picture of sin and suffering is relieved by some broader views of incidents and manners; the moralist remembers sometimes that he is a historian, and seeks to delineate in its salient features the general character of the times. But the *Annals*, the latest of the author's works, the most mature and finished of his productions, is almost wholly satire. Tacitus rarely averts his eyes from the central figure of monstrous depravity, around which, in his view, all society is grouped. He paints the age all Tiberius, or all Nero. Like the Roman soldier chained to his own prisoner, he finds no escape from the horrors he has undertaken to delineate. He enjoys no relief himself, and he allows none to the reader. His hatred of sin is concentrated in hatred of the sinner, and the exasperation into which he has worked himself against the tyrant overflows at last in bitterness towards the age with which he has identified him. Of such a satire no good can come. I cannot imagine that any reader of the *Annals* was ever morally the better for the perusal. Many perhaps have been made worse, confirmed, it may be, in a cynical contempt for mankind, or in a gloomy despair of virtue.

Of the life of Juvenal, on the other hand, we know perhaps even less than of that of Tacitus. The traditions or

That of Juvenal diminishes.

fancies of the scholiasts and anonymous biographers seem to be wholly untrustworthy.¹ But if we may take the order in which the Satires are delivered to us as the actual order of their composition, we may derive from them a pleasing insight into the author's character. We may trace in him, with the advance of years, a fitting progress in gentleness and humanity. By comparing a few passages in his works, we may fix his birth in the year 59; the composition of his first Satire must have been after 100, but probably not long after, that of his fifteenth but little later than 119. Accordingly, Juvenal wrote from about his fortieth to his sixtieth year; and if we compare the earlier with the later Satires, we find a change of style and sentiment aptly corresponding with this advance in age and experience. Thus we notice the fierceness and truculence more especially of the first, the second, the fifth and sixth, which are all aggressive onslaughts on the worst forms of Roman wickedness. The third, and still more the seventh, betray a tone of querulous disappointment, as of a man who had failed of the aim of his life, and finds himself, when past the middle age, outstripped by unworthy competitors, and neglected by the patrons on whom he had just or imagined claims. But in the eighth, the tenth, and the thirteenth, the nobility of his nature reasserts itself. He is no longer the mere assailant of vice, still less is he a murmurer against fortune: he seeks to exalt virtue, to expound the true dignity of human nature, to show to man the proper objects of ambition, to vindicate

¹ The statements respecting Juvenal's life and fortunes in the pretended memoir of Suetonius, the notes of the ancient scholiast, and the brief reference of Sidonius Apollinaris, seem to be mere fancies. The cardinal date is that in *Sat.* xiii. 17., which professes to have been written sixty years after the consulship of Fonteius, the poet's birth year. Of three Fonteii consuls in the first century, I cannot doubt that C. Capito of the year 59 is here intended. I presume that the first and fourth Satires were written early in the reign of Trajan; the thirteenth in 119, at its close; nor does there seem any reason why the intervening pieces may not stand in the order of their composition. The fifteenth was also written under Hadrian, that is to say soon after the consulship of Junius, A. D. 119. See xv. 27.

the goodness and justice of a divine Providence. The eleventh, twelfth, and fourteenth advance yet a step further in the course of a good man's life. They paint the charms of simplicity and virtue; they glorify contentment of mind and friendship; they set before us, with all an old man's gentleness, the reverence due to infancy and innocence. The subject of the fifteenth is a special one, and there is some poverty in the conception, some feebleness in the execution of it; nevertheless, it breathes the true spirit of humanity, and if we regard it as the last of the author's genuine compositions, it makes a worthy completion to a patriarch's mission. The satirist, whose aim is merely negative and destructive, who only pulls down the generous ideas of virtue with which youth embarks on its career, is simply an instrument of evil; and if his pictures of vice are too glowing, too true, the evil is so much the greater; but if he pauses in his course to reconstruct, to raise again our hopes of virtue, and point our steps towards the goal of religion and morality, he may redeem the evil tenfold. The later satires of Juvenal more than compensate for the earlier. The reader who studies him with this clue to the service he has done mankind, will share, I doubt not, the reverential gratitude with which I am wont to regard him.

Tacitus and Juvenal join in the same vigorous protest against the vices of their age, but their united protest against the encroachment of foreign ideas and sentiments, if less loudly and plainly expressed, is in fact not less vigorous. With these illustrious names closes the series of genuine Roman literature; of that spontaneous reflex of a nation's mind which represents its principles and traditions. The later writers in the Roman tongue, few, and for the most part trivial, as they are, must be regarded as imitators of a past from which they have become really dissevered, if they are anything more than mere compilers and antiquarians. But no Roman writers are more thoroughly conservative than these last of the Romans. In them we see

Tacitus and Juvenal eminent among the few remaining champions of Roman ideas.

the culmination of the Flavian reaction against the threatened disintegration of society which, checked more than once by Sulla and Augustus, had still advanced stealthily through three centuries. Tacitus and Juvenal are more wholly Roman than even Cicero or Virgil. They maintain the laws, the manners, the religion of their fathers with more decision than ever, as they feel more than ever how much protection is required for them. But if the old national ideas are thus held by some champions more strictly than ever, the sphere of their influence has no doubt become even narrower than of yore. Rome has dwindled, in this respect, into a provincial town in the centre of her own empire. The ideas of Athens and Alexandria, of Palestine and Asia Minor, exert their sway all around her, and are gaining ground within her walls. The emperor and his senators, the remnant of the historic families of the city, are the only Romans in heart and feeling now left in the empire. Already the emperor has ceased to be a Roman by birth; he will soon be not even a Roman by descent; he will repudiate Roman principles with the scorn of ignorance, perhaps even of vanity; the divorce in sentiment between the emperor and his nobles will throw him more and more into the arms of the soldiery, and end, after many struggles, in his open renunciation of their religion and their home. But in order to understand the impending revolution, we must now turn our eyes towards the Eastern provinces, in which we shall again follow the footsteps of Trajan, the last years of whose reign were spent in great military and political combinations in that quarter.

CHAPTER LXV.

GENERAL EXPECTATION OF A DELIVERER FAVOURED BY AUGUSTUS AND VESPASIAN.—

REVIVAL OF JUDAISM AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.—THE SCHOOLS OF TIBERIAS.—NUMBERS OF THE JEWS IN THE EAST.—SEDITIONS RAISED AND SUPPRESSED.—THE CHRISTIANS REGARDED WITH SUSPICION AS A JEWISH SECT.—ALLEGED DECREES OF NERO AND DOMITIAN.—PERSECUTION IN BITHYNIA, AND LETTERS OF PLINY AND TRAJAN, A. D. 111: A. U. 864.—MARTYRDOM OF IGNATIUS.—THE CHURCH, THE CANON, AND EPISCOPACY.—TRAJAN'S EXPEDITION INTO THE EAST, A. D. 114: A. U. 867.—EARTHQUAKE AT ANTIOCH, A. D. 115.—ANNEXATION OF ARMENIA.—TRAJAN'S CONQUESTS BEYOND THE TIGRIS.—OVERTHROW OF THE PARTHIAN MONARCHY.—TRAJAN LAUNCHES ON THE PERSIAN GULF,—IS RECALLED BY DEFECTIONS IN HIS REAR,—HIS ILL SUCCESS BEFORE ATRA.—HE RETURNS TO ANTIOCH,—HIS ILLNESS AND DEATH AT SELINUS, A. D. 117: A. U. 870.—REVOLT OF THE JEWS IN THE EAST: IN CYPRUS, CYRENE, AND EGYPT.—REVOLT IN PALESTINE.—AKIBA AND BARCOCHEBAS, LEADERS OF THE JEWS.—SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLT.—FOUNDATION OF THE COLONY OF ELIA CAPITOLINA.—FINAL SEPARATION OF THE CHRISTIANS FROM THE JEWS.—(A. D. 111-133: A. U. 864-886.)

AUGUSTUS and Vespasian, with their train of bards, augurs, and declaimers, might cling in hope or despair to the past, and strive to bind the wheels of human thought to the effete traditions of the Capitol. Authority and Genius might perhaps combine to restrain the aspirations of faith and hope within certain limits of class and locality. But their influence, whatever the halo of glory with which it is encircled in our minds, was confined to a single spot and a small society. The waves of opinion and sentiment flowed on, free and uncontrolled, and the ideas of Rome, conqueror and mistress though she was, were left stranded on the shore. We have seen the wide diffusion of the Sibylline prophecies, pointing towards

General expectations of a Deliverer favoured by Augustus and Vespasian.

a new advent or development, in the time of Augustus, and that emperor's efforts to compel the anticipations of mankind to centre and terminate in himself. We have remarked the ready acquiescence of the Roman world in the hope that each succeeding emperor would be in truth its expected Preserver, and how willingly it ascribed divinity to the lords of the human race. The fair promise of Caius and Nero was hailed with insensate acclamations; but Vespasian issuing from Judea and Egypt, seemed more literally to fulfil the presage derived from the Jewish oracles. The claim to miraculous powers, thrust on him even against his will, was doubtless the effect of a predetermination among his flatterers in the East to present him as the true Messiah, possibly with a desire of eclipsing the claims of the Messiah of the Gospel.¹ The leaders of the popular movements among rude nations have at all times pretended to supernatural powers. Such were the claims of Athenio in Sicily, of Sertorius in Spain; yet we must be struck by the urgency with which such claims were advanced at this period by the chiefs of every people with whom the Romans contended, by the Jews, the Britons, the Gauls and the Germans.² The earnestness on

¹ Champagny, *Rome et la Judée*, 499.: "Vespasien semble avoir été arrangé par les historiens pour être une contrefaçon du Christ. Jésus, réalisant la prophétie de Michée, est sorti de Bethléem pour devenir le roi pacifique de toutes les nations: Vespasien, à qui on applique cette même prophétie, sort de Judée pour être le dominateur pacifique d'un empire qui s'appelait le monde. Jésus fait des miracles; Vespasien en fera à son tour. Jusque-là, les prétendus miracles du paganisme se faisaient le plus souvent sous la main de l'homme; l'homme en était le témoin, l'interprète, le prôneur, le préparateur caché plutôt que l'agent direct et libre; ici il n'en sera plus ainsi: Jésus guérissait les infirmes, Vespasien se fera amener des infirmes. Le plus souvent, dans le paganisme, les guérissons prétendues merveilleuses s'opéraient dans un songe qui indiquait le remède au malade; aujourd'hui, c'est à un médecin surnaturel que le songe renverra le malade. Jésus guérissait un aveugle avec sa salive, Vespasien prétendra guérir un aveugle avec sa salive. Jésus a guéri un paralytique, Vespasien guérira un paralytique. La contrefaçon est évidente." I believe the remark to be a just one, and, if so, it shows how deep an impression the historical pretensions of Christianity had already made.

² The Druids in Britain waged a religious war against the Romans; Mari-

spiritual questions which marked the epoch before us, was caused perhaps, in no slight degree, by the wide dispersion of the Jews, who displayed, amidst a world of fellow-subjects and exiles, a visible token of the sustaining power of faith or fanaticism. Nor can we doubt that the awakening of reason and conscience then apparent even in pagan societies, was also due, as in the corresponding circumstances of our own times, to the diffusion of peace, comfort and security, and to the interchange of sentiment which followed upon unrestricted commerce. Even the teachers of philosophy and religion were swayed by the same predominating influence. The first ages of Christianity were signalized by the rapid succession of prophets or wonder-workers, who assumed a sanction for their opinions in their immediate connexion, or actual identification, with the Deity. The Roman sword might still retain the keenness of its edge in the contests of the battle-field; but the narrow and simple faith of the Forum and the Capitol was powerless against the wit and logic, the eloquence and fanaticism, of the schools and synagogues.

These claims to divine powers and a divine mission became more frequent among the Jews after the fall of their holy city. Their morbid superstition received a strong impulse from the overthrow of their temple, the cessation of their most solemn rites, and the mutilation of their ceremonial system. Judaism was distinguished from the religions of Greece and Rome by its strictly local character. The service of Jupiter and Juno, Apollo and Hercules, had been carried by the Pagan to the ends of the world, and the cult of the Acropolis or the Capitol was propagated with little variation from its metropolitan type throughout the colonies of Rome and Athens. But the ritual observances of Jewish worship were confined to one sacred spot: the priesthood, the sacrifices, the holy days, the outward tokens of the ancient covenant, pertained

Overthrow of
the Jewish, and
succession of
the Christian
dispensation.

cus the Gaul affected divine powers; the priestesses of the Germans, Aurinia, Ganna, and Valeda, assumed the direction of the people as instinct with a spiritual authority.

to the ceremonial of the Temple and to no other. The celebration of the Passover ceased with the destruction of the place in which the descendant of Aaron offered a propitiation once a year for the sins of the Jewish people. When the Temple was overthrown and the Temple-service abolished, the Mosaic law was reduced to a bare lifeless record, and the historic cult of Jehovah collapsed. The traditions of the Levitical system, which had survived so many revolutions, captivities and oppressions, were retained henceforth in the recollection of private families only, in domestic observances, in fragmentary usages; they were no longer embodied in a public ritual, no longer guaranteed by a recognized succession of interpreters, nor maintained as the title-deeds of an authorized ministry. The continuity of the Jewish religion was sundered; the distinction of tribes and families was lost; the children of Eleazar and the descendants of Levi were mingled with the common herd; the genealogies so long preserved were lost in the common ruin, and the threads of descent could never be recovered. But, meanwhile, a recent offset from Judaism, the religion of Jesus the Messiah, was at hand to seize the vacant inheritance of divine protection, and to offer a new system, flourishing in the vigour of youth and hope, to the despairing votaries of the old. By many of the Jewish people in all parts of the world, this compensation was gratefully accepted as an unexpected deliverance; but the mass still turned from it with bitterer feelings than ever, and nursed their despair with more fanatical hatred both of the Romans and the Christians.

Whatever allowance we make for the exaggerations of Josephus, it would seem that the massacres of the Jewish war, and the expatriation of its myriads of captives, had left Palestine in a state of desolation from which she was destined never thoroughly to recover. The artificial culture of her arid slopes, once interrupted, required a strong national spirit, nourished with youthful hopes and aspirations, to retrieve it. The province of Judea fell under the emperor's administration, and its tolls

Establishment
of the Jewish
schools at Ti-
berias.

and tributes accrued to his private exchequer. Vespasian, frugal and provident by temper, felt an interest in the repartition of the vacant soil among a new tenantry; and under his superintendence measures were taken for re-peopling the territory with fresh colonists. But Domitian was too reckless of the future, even in respect of his own private interests, to execute the plans bequeathed to him, and during his government the patrimony of the Jewish people was left, we may believe, for the most part in the state to which the war had reduced it. On the hills of Zion and Moriah, indeed, and on other sites of their now ruined cities, the trembling fugitives gradually reassembled, and crouched among the ruins of their fallen palaces; but the habitations they here slowly raised more resembled the squalid villages of the Arabs amid the remains of Petra and Palmyra, than the seats of an established community. It was at Tiberias, on the banks of the celebrated lake which bore its name, that the remnant of the Jewish polity again took root for a season, under the direction of a new school of religious teaching. The priests of the Temple, and the Sanhedrim which had met in its holy courts, were here superseded by the doctors of the law, the rabbis, who interpreted the national Scriptures by the traditions of which they assumed to be the genuine depositaries. Year by year this audacious substitution of the gloss for the letter acquired form and consistency. The simple text of the Law, for which the patriots of old had combated, was overlaid by the commentary of the Mischna, and at a still later period, the text of the Mischna itself was in like manner overlaid by the commentary of the Gemara. The degrees of estimation in which these successive volumes came to be held among the degenerate descendants of Abraham and Moses were marked by the popular comparison which likened the Bible to water, the Mischna to wine, the Gemara to hypocras; or, again, the first to salt, the second to pepper, and the third to frankincense. He who studies the Scripture, it was said, does an indifferent action; he who devotes himself to the Mischna

The Law, the
Mischna, and
the Gemara.

does a good action; but he who learns the Gemara deserves the most glorious of rewards.¹

The sound in heart among the Jews were no doubt now rapidly absorbed into the gathering mass of Christian belief.

Dispersion of the Jews in the East. The perpetuation of the national ideas was abandoned to the dregs and offscourings of the people, by whom they were thus travestied and

degraded. The race which could feed to satiety on the gross fancies of the Talmud, after banqueting so long on the sublime inspiration of the Old Testament, deserved the long eclipse of reason and imagination which was about to envelope it. Nevertheless, the political spirit of the Jews still retained its fervid vitality, and continued to animate them to repeated outbreaks of insensate violence against the power with which it was hopeless to cope. Dispossessed of their ancestral seats, they accepted the doom of national dispersion, and migrated by preference to the regions where former swarms of their own race had already settled, both within

Their numbers in Mesopotamia; their turbulence in Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrene. and beyond the limits of the empire. Multitudes thus transplanted themselves to Egypt and Cyprus, nor fewer perhaps to Mesopotamia, where they fell under the sway of the Parthian monarch. In Egypt, the chronic turbulence of the Jewish residents was increased by this influx from the old country, and attempts were made to engage the whole Jewish population of the African coast in a league against the Romans. Could they indeed be brought to act in concert, their numbers might render them truly formidable. Even before the sudden immigration which followed on the fall of Jerusalem, this flourishing community had often turned the scale in the contests of Alexandria and Cyrene.

The promoters of the movements that ensued pretended, as usual, to a divine mission. In Alexandria a remnant of the Zealots, who had escaped from the slaughter of their countrymen, inflamed the minds of their compatriots with hopes of a special interference,

Severe measures against the Jews in Egypt.

¹ See the authorities in Champagny, *Rome et Judée*, p. 540. Comp. Salvador. ii. 480.

and raised their fanaticism to the highest pitch. In vain did the more sober of the Jewish population protest against this superstitious frenzy; the apprehensions of the government were thoroughly aroused, and Lupus, the prefect of the province, required all the residents of Jewish origin to attest their disavowal of these seditious aspirations by a declaration of submission to Caesar as their master. Such a vow of allegiance sufficed for their protection; but great numbers, impelled by a furious fanaticism, sternly refused to utter the words, and persisted in their refusal in the face of death and tortures. The courage of women, and even of children, in this extremity, were worthy of the heroic age of the nation.¹ But armed resistance was either not attempted, or easily put down. The Jewish temple erected by the priest Onias at Heliopolis, with the sanction of the Ptolemies, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, the only temple throughout the world which was modelled after the pattern of the national sanctuary, and was intended to serve as a solitary substitute for it, was now turned, like the temple at Jerusalem, into a place of defence, and for a moment the senseless multitude offered defiance to their enemies. But the gates were opened at the first summons, and the government, with singular forbearance, was content with expelling the Jews from the spot, and forbidding them to meet there for worship.² Even the customary assembling in the synagogues was not apparently interdicted; the inquisition that followed was simply political, and the religion of the rebel race was not proscribed. So again at Cyrene, where a more violent outbreak occurred, the Romans still spared the Jewish worship. They perceived, with unusual sagacity, that it was easier to control the people if allowed to foster their mutual sectarian jealousies, than if united in heart and mind under a common perse-

Closing of the
Jewish temple
at Heliopolis.

¹ Joseph. *Bell. Jul.* vii. 10. 1.: πάσης γὰρ ἐπ' ἀντοῖς βασιάνου καὶ ζήσης τῶν σωμάτων ἐπινοηθείσης, ὅθ' ἐν τούτῳ μόνον, ὅπως αἰτῶν Καίσαρα δεσπότῃν ὁμολογήσωσιν, οἷδεῖς ἐνέδοκεν, ὅνδ' ἐμύλλησεν ἐπειν.

² Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 10. 3. *Bell. Jul.* vii. 10. 3.

Sedition of
Jonathan at
Cyrene, circ.
A. D. 65.

cution. At Cyrene a leader named Jonathan, led his countrymen into the desert, with the promise of Divine protection, but the movement speedily ended in mutual charges and recriminations. Some of the chiefs of the sedition were sent to Rome by the governor Catullus, to answer for their turbulence, and seem to have there laid accusations against their countryman Josephus, which it required all his credit with Vespasian and Titus to baffle.¹ But at Rome the Jews were perhaps specially protected by the contempt into which they had fallen. They no longer occupied the high places of the city, courted by men and women of noble birth, cherished by one emperor, and feared by another. They slunk from the public sight in the most miserable quarters, and scraped together a livelihood by the pettiest traffic. Their position in society is marked by the passing sneers of Martial and Juvenal.² Their unchangeable spirit of isolation, and the instinct with which they maintained their established customs, are shown even in the places they chose for sepulture, the lonely catacombs, which recalled to their imaginations the caves in which their fathers were buried.³

Among the most vicious features of the national character, and that which contributed above any other to unnerve the Jews in contest with their enemies, was their constant

¹ Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 11. Jonathan was put to death by Vespasian. This is our nearest approximation to the date.

² Juvenal, iii. 14, foll.; vi. 542, foll.; xiv. 96, foll. Martial, iv. 4., vii. 32., xi. 94. We have already noticed the ignorant contempt with which Tacitus had learnt to regard them.

³ According to the most accredited theory at the present day, the catacombs at Rome were originally excavated or adopted by the Jews for their place of sepulture. Their feelings revolted against the Roman mode of burning the dead, and their old traditions would naturally suggest to them the disposal of their mortal remains in caves hewn in the rock. Jerusalem itself had been mined by passages and caverns, but these were used for reservoirs or magazines; it does not appear, I think, that they were appropriated to the purpose of sepulture. The Christians at Rome inherited the burying places of their predecessors in the faith of Palestine.

disposition to inflame their rulers against sects and parties among themselves, with which they had domestic differences. Their political enthusiasts, the Zealots and Sicarii, could postpone every desperate scheme of national resuscitation, to get vengeance on the Moderates, or Herodians, of whom Josephus, as we have seen, was a conspicuous leader.

In the same manner, their most devout religionists were ready at any moment to denounce to prefects and governors the pious followers of the Christ Jesus, and traduce them as intriguers against the public peace, and abandoned to the grossest impurities. The Romans, who had instituted strict inquiries respecting the expectations of a Deliverer so fondly cherished among the Jewish communities, and had specially prosecuted all who pretended to descent from David, were induced by these manœuvres to examine into the tenets of the Christians, so far as related to the person of Christ, the acknowledged founder of their sect; but failing to discover in him any political character, they were generally satisfied with requiring of his followers the same bare acknowledgment of the emperor's supremacy as of their Jewish compatriots. The formula which was proposed to the Jews, was probably identical with that set before the Christians. They were required, no doubt, to *call Cæsar master*. The immoralities alleged against them were disbelieved, or contemptuously disregarded. The traditions of the Church, which point to a general persecution of the believers in the Flavian period, cannot be lightly set aside, and to this extent they may safely be credited, though the assertion of a special decree issued by Nero, and enforced by his successors against them, seems too improbable to be admitted without stronger evidence. The historical traces of such a persecution even in Rome are faint and indecisive; yet, according to all analogy, it was only in Rome, or among Roman citizens in the provinces, that the central government would interfere to prohibit religious usages, however strange and technically illicit. Nor would a special law be required

Inquisition
into the tenets
of the Chris-
tians.

Alleged decrees
of Nero and
Domitian.

for the suppression of a dangerous or immoral usage in the provinces. There the prætor's edict would arm the magistrate with power against disturbers of peace and security; the general authority that magistrate brought from Rome entitled him to protect by his own decree the public tranquillity or decorum; and even if a certain worship was proscribed as illicit in the city, it might still rest practically in his discretion to permit or to prohibit it in his own province.¹

There remains, amidst the wreck of ancient documents, one distinct and most valuable record of the action of the government in this particular at a distance from the capital. Bithynia, the province referred to, and the adjacent parts of Asia, were at the time more leavened with Christian opinions than other districts of the empire. For in these regions the Jews, who had followed perhaps the Roman spoilers and taxgatherers, and taken the land in mortgage for their loans, were especially numerous, and in these the preaching of the Apostles had been eminently successful; here also the old Pagan superstitions had been long undermined, and the soil was favourable for the growth of a new and vigorous shoot of spiritual life. The social and political ferment of the times manifested itself here above most places by yearnings for spiritual illumination. It was appointed, moreover, that the governor of Bithynia in the early years of Trajan should be neither one of the ordinary class of Roman prefects, indifferent alike to all religious manifestations, and indisposed to trouble himself with inquiries about them; nor, on the other hand, a sanguinary bigot, such as often drew the sword at once in fear or hatred, and looked to no other means of repressing odious opinions. The younger Pliny, of whom we have already heard so favourably, was vigilant and laborious, and his personal attachment to his master rendered him

Pliny's letter to Trajan respecting the Christians in Bithynia.

¹ Even the Christian apologists, who assert the promulgation of a law against their sect by Nero, speak of the persecutions as occasional and local. Such is the complaint of Quadratus under Hadrian: *ὅτι δὴ τινες πονηροὶ ἄνδρες τοὺς ἡμετέρους ἐνοχλεῖν ἐπειρώσιν*. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 3.

more than commonly anxious to put down any movements in his district which might seem prejudicial to the interests of the government. But he was at the same time kindly in disposition, a lover of justice, desirous of acting fairly and considerately. He made it a point of conscience to govern his province as a philosopher, not as a mere soldier.¹ He was resolved to suppress all political enemies; but he was resolved to do so with temper and moderation. Hence his correspondence with Trajan, one of our most curious monuments of antiquity, contains the formal justification of his acts which he desired to leave on record. From these letters we learn all that can really be known of the methods of the Roman government in regard to the Christians.²

Thus we find Pliny speaking of the Christians, at the commencement of the second century, as a well-known class, whose name requires no explanation, and of the law regarding them as sufficiently understood. When certain persons were brought before him, charged with the *crime of being Christians*, he simply demanded whether they were really such, and on their acknowledging the designation, and persisting a second and third time in the confession, he ordered them to be capitally punished.³ If, however, they were Roman citizens,

Pliny's proceedings
against the
Christians.
A. D. 112.

¹ See the advice he gives to a friend who is about to undertake the government of Asia. *Ep.* viii. 24.

² The well-known letter of Pliny and the answer of Trajan are numbered x. 96, 97. in Gierig's edition, to which I have referred throughout (vulg. 97, 98.). Their date is fixed by Clinton to A. D. 104, A. U. 857, the seventh year of Trajan's reign; but see Greswell, *Suppl. Dissert.* p. 200, foll., where the chronology of Pliny's letters is arranged, and his proconsulship assigned to 111-113; the letter in question to 112. Mr. Creswell suggests the probability that Pliny, of whom we have no further mention, joined Trajan in the East, and perished in the earthquake at Antioch in 115. See below.

³ Plin. *Epist.* x. 96. 3.: "perseverantes duci jussi." He thinks it necessary to excuse this severity by the remark that, whatever might be the complexion of their opinions, the obstinacy of the persons who thus maintained them in defiance of the government, was in itself deserving of punishment. Roman citizens were sent to be dealt with in Rome.

he sent them to Rome for trial. He consults the emperor whether this is the proper mode of proceeding, which, as he admits, seems rather to increase the number of the denounced, and to fan the flame of perverse opposition to the law.¹ On the other hand, the measures he has taken of his own accord for checking the informers, and forbidding inquiry to be made into the profession of the obnoxious tenets, have been speedily attended with good effects: the temples have become more frequented, and there is a readier sale for beasts for sacrifice. Hence it appears that the mere profession of the name of Christian had been once ruled to be capital in this province; but the actual execution of the law lay in the governor's discretion, and he, if considerate and conscientious, or if the affair seemed to assume unusual importance, would refer the decision to the emperor himself.² The famous persecution of the Christians in Bithynia was, I believe, a temporary measure of precaution against disturbances apprehended by the local government from the spread of strange and suspected usages rather than doctrines, which seemed connected more or less closely with the disaffection of the Jews. The danger uppermost in Pliny's mind was that which might spring from a political combination.³ The Christians and the Jews were subjected, as we have seen, to a similar inquisition, wherever their

¹ "Mox ipso tractatu, ut fieri volet, diffundente se crimine, plures species inciderant," l. c. 4. Persons were accused, apparently from motives of private spite, who denied at once that they were or ever had been Christians, and sacrificed without hesitation before the images of the gods and of the emperor.

² The rescripts of the emperors addressed to the governors of particular provinces did not apply elsewhere unless specially provided. See Trajan to Pliny, *Epist.* x. 75.: "quæstio quæ pertinet ad eos qui liberi nati, expositi, deinde sublati . . . sæpe tractata est; nec quidquam invenitur in commentariis eorum principum qui ante me fuerunt, quod ad omnes provincias sit constitutum. Epistolæ sane sunt Domitiani ad Avidium . . . quæ fortasse debent observari: sed inter eas provincias de quibus rescripsit non est Bithynia." Comp. *Epist.* x. 74. on the same subject: "recitabatur edictum quod dicebatur D. Augusti ad Annium, et D. Vespasiani ad Lacedæmonios, et D. Titi ad eodem, deinde ad Achæos, etc."

³ Plin. *Epist.* x. 96. 7.: "secundum mandata tua hetærias esse vetueram."

numbers rendered them objects of jealousy. But if Jews or Christians could acquiesce in the form of homage to the emperor, neither one nor the other could offer the most trifling service to the idols of paganism.¹ With respect to both classes of recusants the government employed the harshest means to enforce submission, its barbarity increasing with the defiance it encountered. But here the parallel ends. All that can be said for the Jews even by their own co-religionists, in this cruel trial, is that they suffered with dauntless constancy, and bore a noble testimony to their faith. But upon the Christians, now at the threshold of their long career of manifold temptations, a far higher eulogium has been passed. Their witness is a political enemy, their judge is a pagan philosopher. Pliny allows that he can discover no crime, not even the crime of political disaffection, among them: their meetings, though conducted privately and before daylight, were completely innocent, and their bloodless ceremonial confined to singing hymns to the Founder of their faith, as a Divine Being, and to binding themselves by a vow, ratified by a simple meal in common, not to rob, nor to cheat, nor to commit adultery.² So ancient and genuine a testimony to the virtue of the first believers, and to the peculiar graces of their life and conversation, is justly regarded as one of the proudest monuments

His testimony
to their virtues.

¹ Thus Pliny requires the Christians to sacrifice to the gods and the genius of the emperor: "cum praeunte me Deos appellarent, et imagini tuæ, quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, thure ac vino supplicarent." Plin. l. c. 5.

² Plin. l. c. 7.: "adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem, seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum abnegarent, etc." All those merits, through freely acknowledged, weighed as nothing with so zealous a courtier, against the apparent disregard, not of the gods so much as of the emperor. Pliny flattered himself, that his measures against these innocent meetings were effectual: "quod ipsum facere desiisse post edictum meum."

of our faith. The letter of Pliny, it has been well said, is the first *Apology for Christianity*.¹

Nevertheless, this favourable testimony availed little to protect the Christians from the alarms of paganism. Trajan

The popular apprehension of their political intrigues.

indeed, when solicited to determine how they should be treated, was satisfied with recommending mild measures in a tone of almost contemptuous liberality. He directed that the professors of the proscribed opinions should not be sought for, and that no encouragement should be given to the informers, who were generally Jews.² Still, however, if malefactors so bold and perverse should be brought before the tribunals, the majesty of the law required that they should be firmly and sternly dealt with. The courage or fanaticism exhibited by these sectarians inflamed the temper of their opponents, while even superstition might combine to exasperate the pagans against the new enemies, in whose zeal and purity they already read

Superstitious terrors of the people.

the doom of their hollow pretensions. The confident anticipations of a coming Deliverer, proclaimed from the Christian pulpits, seemed connected with the repeated threats of Nero's return from the Euphrates, and the intrigues of the Parthian court; while the recurring conflagrations of the City and the Capitol, the fatal eruption of Vesuvius, and renewed activity of its long dormant fires, pointed in the minds, not of the vulgar only, but of many intelligent thinkers, to a near fulfilment of the Christian prophecy, that the world itself was about to be consumed in a final catastrophe.³

¹ Wallon, *Hist. de l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 13.

² Plin. *Epist.* x. 97. Trajan carefully limits his decision to the particular case and locality: "neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habent, constitui potest." He requires that all denunciations of Christians should be certified with the name of the informer: "sine auctore vero propositi libelli nullo crimine locum habere debent. Nam et pessimi exempli nec nostri sæculi est." It is very remarkable that the emperor speaks of these people as if he had never heard of them before. It is difficult to suppose that he regarded them in any other light than as members of an illegal political club.

³ There is something startling in the modern tone of sentiment attested by

The earliest charge against the believers was that of perverse and anti-social usages, and a colour was given to their proscription by the want of legal toleration under which they technically laboured. But these frivolous imputations were reinforced by the fears of the multitude, who referred every calamity to the anger of the national divinities insulted by their pretended impiety. The tradition of the primitive Church, that Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, was examined in that city by Trajan in person, and condemned by him to a martyr's death, coincides with the account of an earthquake by which the Eastern capital was almost destroyed during the emperor's residence in Syria. The date of the martyrdom itself is indeed a matter of doubt and controversy; and though the tradition can hardly be rejected, it must be acknowledged that the historical evidence for it is imperfect and conflicting.¹ The authorities unanimously refer the event to a period when it can be shown that Trajan was still in the West, and the account of the interview between the emperor and the bishop, on which so much of its interest depends, rests, it must be allowed, on suspicious testimony.² But however this may

Martyrdom of
Ignatius, bishop
of Antioch.
A. D. 115.

Pliny in reference to the great eruption: "multi ad Deos manus tollere, plures nunquam jam Deos ullos, *atenuamque illam et notissimam noctem mundo interpretantur.*" *Epist.* vi. 20. The appointed destruction of the world by fire was a tenet of the fashionable stoicism of the day. Lucan, vii. 814.: "Communis mundo superest rogos."

¹ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 36. S. Hieron. *De viris illustr.* 16. The first of these authorities fixes the date to the tenth year of Trajan, A. D. 107. The second to the eleventh, A. D. 108. The *Martyrium S. Ignatii* places it in the consulship of Sura and Senecio, i. e. A. D. 107. It is now generally agreed that Trajan did not go to the East earlier than 114 (see Francke, Clinton, and Gresswell), and remained there till the time of his death in 117. The earthquake at Antioch occurred Jan. 115 (see below), during the consulship of Messala and Pedo, and the martyrdom must be assigned to December of the same year. *Martyr.* c. 6.

² We need not enter into the question about the genuineness of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius. The authenticity of the *Martyrium*, or *Acta Martyrii*, is shaken by the apparent error in the date. The later Christian writers seem to have followed its chronology pretty closely, and so far may be considered to at-

be, the barbarity of the government in its proscription of opinion, and the meek endurance of the believers, are fully established on the unquestioned evidence of Pliny; and that the fanaticism of both people and rulers should be inflamed against them by the occurrence of great public calamities is only too congenial to the common course of human affairs.¹

On ordinary occasions, however, as appears from Pliny's memorable despatches, the government showed some consideration for the unfortunate sectaries, and made an attempt to check promiscuous attacks upon them. Meanwhile other enemies, more bitter

Development
of the Christian
society.

than the legitimate guardians of the state and the state-religion, were prompt in frustrating these merciful inclinations. As the Christians were themselves at first sectarians innovating on the national creed of Judaism till they were cast forth from its bosom, so there soon appeared within the pale of Christianity a strong disposition to discover fresh modifications of Christian doctrine, and provoke expulsion from the new community. The Church sought to convince the innovators alternately by argument and authority; and it is clear from her earliest traditions that she leant to the second of these means at least as readily as to the first. Her

The Church,
the Canon of
Scripture, and
Episcopacy.

discipline was drawn closer by the stricter organization to which she was now subjected: the decision of questions of doctrine was brought

test its antiquity. We are at a loss, however, to account for the bishop being sent to suffer martyrdom at Rome, and the narrative bears on its face a strong appearance of being moulded into a counterpart to the last voyage of St. Paul.

¹ The testimony of Hegesippus, the primitive historian of Christianity (cited by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 32.) to the martyrdom of Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, under Trajan, is generally admitted. See Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 150. It seems that the martyr was stated to be the second bishop of Jerusalem, James, who suffered A. D. 44, having been the first. He was also the son of Cleopas. He was prosecuted, according to the account, as one of the royal seed of David, a subject of inquisition, as we have seen, under Domitian. The martyrologists insisted upon making him a blood-relation and also a hearer of Christ, and asserted that he was a hundred and twenty years old at the time of his death. The year of the martyrdom is not specified, but it was in the prefecture of Atticus. It is not said that the emperor took cognizance of the case.

to a more definite point by the formal ratification of a Canon of Scripture, and the interpretation of Holy Writ was referred to a tradition, the keys of which were lodged with her rulers, the bishops. The union of the true believers was maintained by the test of sacramental forms; and the Church assumed the proportions of a visible system, manifest to the world without, as well as known to its own members. The power of excommunication from this body, assigned to the bishops, was easily suffered to take the place of reasoning with people, against whose self-will and vanity reasoning would have little availed. The dying exhortations of Ignatius, purporting to be addressed to the various churches during his pilgrimage from the imperial tribunal to the amphitheatre, derive their force and interest from their reiterated admonitions to obey the bishop, and eschew doctrinal error by holding fast the traditions preserved by the Episcopate. It is clear that the almost open announcement of this social organization, this spiritual empire in the centre of the temporal, must have roused unbounded jealousy in a government which could hardly tolerate a committee to collect subscriptions for building an aqueduct. The heretics saw their advantage, and retorted on the orthodox by denouncing them to the government, and still more fatally by exciting the passions of the populace against them;¹ for when the populace cried aloud in the theatres for any object of their capricious desires, the Roman governor was bound, by the prescriptions of ancient usage, to give it them. Hence the sanguinary character of the Roman policy towards the Christians even at this early stage, and the mixture with it of popular ferocity, so soon outrunning the tardier and more

¹ Pliny's account of the treatment of Christians is confirmed by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 33., with the addition that the informations against them were often laid by the heretics. For the history of these persecutions he refers, besides Pliny, to Tertullian, and evidently has the *Martyrium Ignatii*, and some of the epistles of Ignatius, before him. For the martyrdom of Symeon bishop of Jerusalem he refers to Hegesippus.

considerate pace at which the government was of itself disposed to move.¹

The Eastern provinces, at this juncture, might well require the presence of the emperor in person. A new, an increasing, and apparently a dangerous society, was striking root, and spreading its branches abroad beyond the *Ægean*. Its members, while professing outward obedience to the government, avoided public offices, secluded themselves from the mass of the people, held and disseminated opinions of doubtful import, in which the majesty of *Cæsar*, as well as the deity of *Jupiter*, was secretly despised, if not openly abjured. On the one hand there was the peril of combination—for the Christians were even more closely united than the Jews—on the other, there was the peril of enthusiasm, ever hateful and suspicious to a centralized machine of administration. From city to city, and in the less conspicuous recesses of the country villages, sophists and hierophants, conjurors and wonder-workers, moved by stealth or openly, and sowed the elements of discontent and disturbance. The Jews had repeatedly proved themselves the most obstinate opponents of the *Cæsars*, and they were even now plainly intent on forming fresh combinations: the Christians appeared to share the obstinacy of the Jews, while they inflamed it with a new and still more fervent fanaticism. In the background of this fermenting mass lay the formidable power of the Parthians, ever ready to harbour exiles, to encourage malcontents, and to plot against the interests of the empire. To encounter the overt, to bring to light the hidden dangers of the time, the staff of proconsuls and procurators, even when supported by the legions, was insufficient. The crisis demanded the august

¹ Mosheim puts this habitual policy in a clear light in speaking on this subject: *De rebus Christ. sæc. ii. c. xi.* note: "*sociatæ plebis postulationes rejicere præsidēs non audebant, ne seditioni locum facerent: deinde veteri Romanorum jure sive consuetudine sic comparatum erat . . . ut plebs quoties ad ludos publicos . . . conveniret, ab Imperatore ac præsidibus quæ vellet petere posset: quæ petitiones repudiari nullo modo poterant.*"

presence and the complete authority of the master of both the soldiers and the people of Rome.

It was not, accordingly, we may believe, from mere restless love of enterprise, nor from the ambition so often present to the mind of Roman commanders, of rivalling the great Eastern conquerors, but from a conviction of the importance of the crisis to the welfare

*Interference of
the Parthians
with Armenia.*

of the empire, that Trajan relinquished the ease he had earned by his Dacian exploits, and plunged again, towards the close of his career, into the feverish excitement of a great national struggle. But the ostensible motive of the war on which he now entered was the interference of the Parthians with the affairs of Armenia. Vologesus, as we have seen, had accepted the terms imposed on him by Nero, and had been perhaps too deeply impressed with the power and magnificence he had witnessed at Rome to venture to tamper with them. Tiridates, king of Armenia, continued to hold his crown in acknowledged dependence on the empire of the West. When, however, the succession to the Roman purple was in dispute, Pacorus II., the son and successor of Vologesus, did not scruple to take open part with a pretender to the Armenian throne. The object, indeed, of his favour proved unsuccessful. Vespasian, though compelled to dissemble while his own fortunes were in the balance, was jealous and angry. By the time that he had established his power he had become weary of fighting; nor, indeed, was the position of affairs at home favourable to an arduous and expensive struggle. Titus reposed on his Judean laurels, and could afford to overlook the slight. Domitian, in his turn, regarded with the apathy of a feeble understanding the insults of so distant a rival. Pacorus was emboldened by impunity, and carried, it was said, his defiance so far as to form relations with Decebalus, gathering up the threads of alliance which had connected Mithridates of old with the barbarian chiefs beyond the Tanais and Borysthenes. He seems, however, to have stood in awe of the martial character of Trajan, and to have refrained from sending aid to the Dacian prince on the

Danube, and from effecting a diversion in his favour by an attack on the side of the Euphrates. His movements were confined to redoubled efforts for the extension of the Parthian influence over Armenia. After the death of Pacorus his brother Chosroes pursued the same policy, and ventured to recommend a son of the deceased king of Parthia, named Exedares, to fill the vacant throne of Tiridates. But Trajan

Resisted by
Trajan.
A. D. 114.

had now completed the subjugation of Dacia, and was at leisure to demand reparation for this insult. Armenia, he declared, was the vassal of Rome, not of Parthia. She must accept her kings from the master of the legions which had so often sprung from the Euphrates to the Araxes, and given proof of their power to annex, if so it pleased their leaders, the whole realm to the empire. Chosroes was alarmed at the menaces addressed to him, and still more at the promptitude with which his opponent rushed towards the scene of action. He sent envoys to meet Trajan at Athens, and assured him that he had already compelled Exedares, whom he represented as equally faithless to both powers, to descend from the throne. At the same time, however, he presumed, it seems, to suggest the substitution of Parthamasiris, another son of Pacorus, for the unworthy Exedares, only asking the Roman emperor to invest him with the diadem, instead of bestowing it himself. It appeared, however, that Trajan had other ends in view than to settle a matter of ceremonial with the king of Parthia. He was resolved to establish the supremacy of Rome throughout the East, by some notable exploits, and, old though he now was, he would not suffer his plans to be frustrated by a premature accommodation.¹ He rejected the presents with which Chosroes had accompanied his overtures, and deigned to make no other reply to his proposals but that the friendship of princes should be estimated by deeds, rather than by

¹ The age of Trajan in 114 was sixty-two years. Julian, *Cæs.* p. 328 A, refers to his advanced age: *πρὸς Παρθαίους πρὶν μὲν ἀδικεῖσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν οὐκ εἶδην δεῖν χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἱπποῖς· ἀδικοῦσι δὲ ἐπεξήλθον, οὐδὲν ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας κωλυθεῖς· καίτοι διδόντων μοι τῶν νόμων τὸ μὴ στρατεῦεσθαι.*

words, and that, when he arrived himself in Syria, he would act as befitted the occasion. With these ominous words he dismissed the courtiers of Chosroes, and continued his progress through Asia and Cilicia, till he finally arrived, towards the close of the year 114, at the headquarters of the Roman government in Antioch.¹

Trajan arrives
at Antioch.

While awaiting the season for military movements, restoring the strictness of military discipline, and superintending the details of the civil administration of the East, a calamity occurred which might have daunted the courage of a less resolute ruler. It was in the course of this same winter, early in the year 115, according to the most exact chronology, that the splendid capital of Syria was visited by an earthquake, one of the most disastrous apparently of all the similar inflictions from which that luckless city has periodically suffered. The commotion of the elements, the overthrow of edifices, and destruction of multitudes of people in the ruins, are described with great emphasis by Dion, who adds, that the calamity was enhanced by the presence of unusual crowds from all the cities of the East, assembled to pay homage to the emperor, or to take part in his expedition. Among the victims were many Romans of distinction, including Pedo, one of the consuls for the year, who had just entered on his office. Trajan himself only escaped by creeping through a window, with the assistance of a man of gigantic stature, who was evidently supposed to have been some divine protector. The population were compelled to encamp, in that inclement season, in the Circus, while Mount Casius, the lofty eminence which towers above the city, and seems almost to impend over it, appeared, to their excited imaginations, to be shaken by the violence of the repeated shocks, and trembled as if about to fall and overwhelm the remnants of the ruin.²

Earthquake at
Antioch.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 17. Francke, *Gesch. Traj.* p. 261, foll. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.*

² Dion, lxxviii. 25. The earthquake at Antioch is reckoned by Orosius, along with other calamities of the same nature, as a divine judgment on the persecution of the Christians. "Terræ motu quatuor urbes Asiæ subversæ . .

The events of Trajan's expedition into the East, the most brilliant in the extent and rapidity of its conquests of any exploit of the Roman arms, though doomed to ominous obscurity at its close, may be divided, brief as was the interval it embraced, into two portions. The first of these includes, as the work of a few months only, the annexation of Armenia to the Roman dominions, and the consolidation of the Roman power throughout the regions between the Euxine and the Caspian, the Euphrates and the Caucasus. Our authorities, indeed, are here confused and fragmentary, and it is only as a choice of difficulties that we accept the arrangement and chronology which seem best accredited. The commencement of the year 115 was no doubt occupied with preparations for a great military progress, and the emperor's advance must have been retarded by the disaster at Antioch. But the legionaries, whose habits of endurance had been relaxed under the enervating climate of Syria, required to be guided with a strong hand, and Trajan did not hesitate to keep the field through the summer heats.¹ As he advanced from the Syrian capital to the Armenian frontier, he received the petty princes of the regions on his route, and accepted their homage and their gifts with the air of an Oriental potentate. Ascending the stream of

et Græcorum civitates duo . . . Tres Galatiæ civitates eodem terræ motu dirutæ . . . Pantheon Romæ fulmine concrematum." We can easily suppose that the Christians were conscious that the persecutions they now suffered were connected with these portentous disasters. The Pagans, on the other hand, were deeply impressed with them, as judgments requiring peculiar methods of expiation. Thus the survivors at Antioch erected a temple in their beautiful suburb of Daphne to Zeus the Saviour. Francke, *Gesch. Traj.* p. 268., from Malalas and Eustathius. A fresh outbreak of the Jews in Egypt and Cyrene at this juncture may perhaps be also referred to the excitement which followed on the catastrophe at Antioch. See Oros. l. c. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 2.

¹ The indiscipline of the Syrian legions and the vigorous measures of Trajan are painted in strong colours by Fronto, *Princip. Hist. in Opp. Ined.* ii. 340.: "corruptissimi vero omnium Syriatici milites, seditiosi, contumaces, apud signa infrequentes . . . Tantam militaris disciplinæ labem coercuit, industria sua ad militandum exemplo proposita," etc.

the Euphrates from the Roman outpost at Zeugma, he occupied the passages of that river at Samosata and Elegia; and here, on the frontier of the Greater Armenia, he awaited the arrival of Parthamasiris, whom he had summoned to attend him.¹ The pretender to the throne of Armenia affected independence, and instead of appearing in person, took the liberty of sending envoys to confer with the rival chieftain. Trajan refused to admit the vassals of a vassal into his presence, and Parthamasiris, now thoroughly alarmed, was compelled to repair himself to the Roman quarters. The Parthian, however, though no match for a Roman enemy in the field, was a bold and magnanimous adversary. He advanced gallantly, with a small retinue, to the emperor's tribunal in the centre of the camp. Taking the diadem from his own brows he laid it at Trajan's feet; then, drawing himself up, he stood in dignified silence, expecting that this mute submission would be accepted in place of humiliating declarations, and that the emblem of sovereignty would be returned to him. But at the sight of this expressive act of homage from the son of the once terrible Pacorus, the whole army raised a shout and loudly saluted Trajan as Imperator, and victor of a bloodless field. The Parthian was startled by this sudden tumult, and apprehended danger to his person. Turning about to retire, he found himself surrounded and retreat in-

Dignified behaviour of Parthamasiris, the Parthian claimant to the throne.

¹ Some of our geographers suppose the existence of two places of the name of Elegia, one corresponding to a modern Ilidjeh, the other to Iz-Oghlu. I find the latter only in Kiepert's elaborate map of Asia Minor, placed on the right or Roman bank of the Euphrates, just above the spot where the river falls into the defiles of the Taurus, as Samosata stands just below them. Perhaps this spot is more strictly in Cappadocia than in the Lesser Armenia, which are commonly represented as separated by the stream of the Tokhmah-Sir; but on this matter we have no precise information. In Dion, lxxi. 2., a Roman force is said to be cut to pieces, A. D. 162, by the Parthians at Elegia in Armenia; and this Elegia can only be the frontier station on the Euphrates, as Armenia Major, which was annexed to the empire in 116, was relinquished a few years later, and no Roman force would be quartered within it. I am inclined, therefore, to believe in only one Elegia.

tercepted. He once more confronted the emperor, and demanded a private interview, that any degrading concessions required of him might at least be made out of the sight both of his friends and his enemies. He was then led, courteously as it would seem in the first instance, into the prætorium; but the terms he offered were not sufficient. Trajan used no forbearance to the rival now in his power. He would be satisfied with no less than the cession of his country, and even this capitulation must be accompanied with galling indignities. The emperor again ascended his tribunal, and Parthamasiris, frustrated in a second attempt to escape, was now led as a captive before him, and required to pronounce his submission in public, that no false account of the circumstances might be suffered to transpire. The Parthian, in this extremity, maintained his self-possession. He proudly affirmed that he was neither captured nor conquered; but had come of his own accord, as Tiridates had come to Nero, to confer on equal terms with a generous rival. Trajan curtly replied, with the effrontery of a Paullus or a Pompeius, that Armenia was a Roman dependency, and that he would give its crown to none, but would place it under a governor from Rome. Parthamasiris and his countrymen were then directed to leave the camp, but a Roman squadron was given him as an escort, to prevent his communicating with the native chiefs on his route homewards. His Armenian attendants were, however, detained; for they were now pronounced to be Roman subjects, and to owe no allegiance to the foreign intruder.¹

Even from Dion's account, which has been thus repeated, meagre as it is, we are led to apprehend that Trajan's conduct was marked with a contemptuous disregard of the treatment due to a fair and open enemy. From the casual expression, indeed, of an obscure writer, it has been long inferred that Parthamasiris actually perished;² and the fragments of a contemporary history

Trencherous
slaughter of
Parthamasiris.

Dion, lxxviii. 18-20.

² Eutrop. viii. 3.: "Parthamasire occiso," to which we may now add the

lately discovered, leave no doubt of the fact, that the dismissal of Parthamasiris was only a feint, and that the emperor took care to have him again arrested, and when he resisted and flew to arms, caused him to be brutally slain. While in many respects the public morality of the Romans was purified by their long civilization, it must be acknowledged that in the treatment of their foes they had made little advance either in clemency or good faith. But this sharp and sudden blow was successful. Parthamasiris may have had no firm footing in the country over which he had usurped dominion. The Armenians, finding that they had no choice but between submission to Rome or to Parthia, may have preferred the rule of a proconsul to that of a satrap. At all events, they yielded without a blow. The Greater and the Lesser Armenia were now, for the first time, annexed to the empire, and reduced to the form of a province. The Roman standards were planted on the shores of the Caspian. Araxes chafed in vain against the piers of a Roman bridge. While these arrangements were in progress the conqueror turned northward, and reached the hill-station of Satala on the Lycus, which commanded the road into the wild districts on the eastern shores of the Euxine. Here he received the homage of the Heniochi, and gave a king to the Albani. Here he graciously accepted the alliance of the Iberi, the Sauromatæ, and the tribes of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. He might hope, perhaps, to close the sources of the perennial stream of Nomade savagery which ever broke against the frontiers of his Dacian provinces. But the Romans were pleased to hear once more the names of clients and tributaries over whom their great Pompeius had triumphed in the good old days of conquest; and they exclaimed with exultation, that under the bravest of her emperors, Rome again *squared at the world*.¹

Both the Armenias annexed to the Roman empire.

supplemental testimony of Cornelius Fronto (*Princip. Hist.* p. 349.): "Trajano cædes Parthamasiris regis supplicis haud satis excusata; tametsi ultro ille vim cæptans, tumultu orto, merito interfectus est, meliore tamen Romanorum fama impune supplex abisset, quam jure supplicium luisset."

¹ Thus I venture to translate the pugilistic metaphor of Rufus, *Breviar*,

The subsequent exploits of Trajan were compressed within a very short space of time, and we are led to suppose that before the close of this eventful year, he launched his victorious legions against the centre of the Parthian power. The direction of his march may be traced perhaps by the titles of the princes whose submission he successively received. At the head of these was Abgarus, king of Edessa, at the first stage on the road which crossed Mesopotamia from Zeugma to Nineveh. The next in order was Sporaces, phylarch, as he is called, of Anthesmusia, a town of Macedonian origin on the river Chaboras. His route then was the same which had proved fatal to Crassus; but Trajan was an abler captain than the luckless triumvir, and he was more fortunate, also, in having a less able enemy to contend with. The Parthian kings, though still bold in language and haughty in their pretensions, were at this time broken in power; the spirit of their nation was well nigh exhausted, and their realm was ready to fall a prey to any resolute assailant. Trajan, indeed, won his way by intrigue as much as by the power of his arms. His interview with the young son of Abgarus, in which he affected to pull the prince playfully by the ears, exemplifies the trivialities to which a victorious emperor would descend, when it was more convenient to deceive than to threaten his victim. The dominions of these petty chiefs were not less surely absorbed in the new provinces which the invader added to his empire.

From thence, taking advantage of the feuds subsisting between the Parthian Chosroes and his vassals, Mannus and Manisarus, the invader pushed on to Singarâ, took Nisibis, bridged the Tigris, and in spite of the desultory resistance of the moun-

Further acquisitions in Mesopotamia.

Trajan crosses the Tigris, and creates the new province of Assyria.

c. 21.: "movit lacertos." Eutrop. l. c.: "Armeniam . . . recepit. Albanis regem dedit. Iberorum regem et Sauromatorum et Bosporanorum, Osdroenorum et Colchorum in fidem recepit. Carduenos et Marcomedos occupavit." Comp. Plin. *Epist.* x. 13-15. The occupation of Satala is mentioned by Dion, lxxviii. 19., but the order of events is, as I have said, much confused in this writer's remains.

tain tribes (for the Parthian king seems to have led no army to oppose him), planted himself firmly in the region of Adiabene.¹ The resistance of the Parthians was paralysed by intestine divisions; the Romans marched triumphantly from station to station; and before the end of the year Trajan had created the new province of Assyria, stretching beyond the Tigris to the mountain ridge of Choatres and Zagrus, and including the modern Kurdistan. The title of Parthicus was well bestowed on the achiever of so splendid a conquest, who had thus won for the City of the West the sites of Alexander's greatest victories, Arbela and Gaugamela.²

Trajan passed the ensuing winter at Nisibis or Edessa. His ardent soul, still glowing beneath the weight of years, was inflamed with the prospect of easy and unlimited conquests in remotest Asia. From the Euphrates to the Indus, all the tribes of the far East were fluttering with the anticipation of his descent upon them.³ Vast preparations were made, and a mighty armament was wafted in the spring of 116 down the Euphrates, and the flotilla itself transported by simple machinery across the neck of land which separates the Euphrates from the Tigris, in order to arrive at Ctesiphon.⁴ This great city, the residence of the Parthian sultans,

Trajan descends the Euphrates, takes Ctesiphon, and subdues the Parthians.
A. D. 116.
A. U. 869.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 26.: ἐπὶ τὸ ἐὰρ ὑπὲρ ἡμεῶν. I can hardly reconcile this mark of time with the circumstances detailed, whether we suppose the passage of the Tigris to take place in 115 or 116. I have supposed in the text that this was the termination of the campaign of 115, and that Trajan descended the Tigris or the Euphrates in the spring of the following year.

² The title of Parthicus does not appear on Trajan's medals in this year (115); but some time must be allowed for the news of his last exploits to reach Rome. On the conquest of Ctesiphon, in the ensuing year, the army is said to confirm the title, as though it had been already given. Dion, lxxviii. 28.: τὴν ἐπικλησιν τοῦ Παρθικοῦ ἐβεβίωσαν.

³ Victor, *De Cæsar.* 13.: "Ad ortum Solis cunctæ gentes quæ inter Indum et Euphratem sunt bello concussæ."

⁴ Dion, lxxviii. 28.: ὑπερενεγκὼν τὰ πλοῖα ὀλκοῖς, i. e. on rollers covered with greased skins. Comp. Hor. *Od.* i. 4. 2. The canals which formerly led

at once opened its gates; the army saluted their chief as Emperor, and confirmed the title of Parthicus. The independence of the great monarchy, once Rome's only rival, seemed for a moment extinguished. The king fled into the interior of Media, but the Roman forces under Trajan's lieutenants pursued him as far as Susa, and there captured his daughter and his golden throne. Leaving to Lusius Quietus, to Julius Alexander, and to Erucius Clarus the complete reduction of these regions, and more particularly of Seleucia on the Tigris, a city whose Grecian liberties even the Parthian monarchs had respected, Trajan descended in person the stream of the now united rivers, and launched his bark on the Persian Gulf. His restless imagination was not yet satisfied. He could not repress the puerile ambition of emulating the first European conqueror of the East, and leading his legions to the ocean on which the triremes of Alexander had floated. Seeing a vessel laden for India, and about to sail, he exclaimed, *Were I yet young, I would not stop till I too had reached the limits of the Macedonian conquest.*¹ But the hand of fate was already upon him, and had he really breathed so wild an aspiration, the circumstances of the realm he had left behind him must have speedily dispelled his delusions.

Trajan launches
on the Persian
Gulf.

from the Euphrates to the Tigris had silted up under the negligent government of the Parthians, and the Euphrates constantly overflowing its banks had converted these once fertile tracts into a morass. It is true, as Dion remarks, that the bed of this river is higher in its mid course than that of the Tigris; but by skilful engineering, a portion of the higher stream had formerly been conveyed safely into the lower. Comp. Arrian. *Anab. Alex.* vii. 7.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 28.; Eutrop. viii. 2.; Julian, *Cæs.* p. 22.: ἐπεδείκνυνεν αὐτοῖς τὸ τε Γετικὸν καὶ τὸ Παρθικὸν τρόπαιον· ἡτιᾶτο δὲ τὸ γῆρας, ὥς οὐκ ἐπιτρέψαν αὐτῷ τοῖς Παρθικοῖς πράγμασιν ἐπεξελθεῖν. Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 289. This writer places Trajan's visit to the Persian Gulf in 117. If this could be admitted, the descent of the Euphrates might be assigned to the spring of 116; but it seems to me not to allow time enough for the return to Ctesiphon and transactions there previous to the journey homeward. See below. In either case there is no pretence for the assumption of some moderns that Trajan launched upon the Arabian ocean.

After a few skirmishes with the tribes on the coast, the news of defections in his rear caused him hastily to retrace his steps. Seleucia, after her first submission, encouraged perhaps by his absence, had broken out in rebellion, and overpowered a Roman army. The city was stormed by Clarus and Alexander, and according to the historians burnt to the ground; but this, there is reason to believe, is a gross exaggeration. Trajan, however, was undeceived. He confessed that the complete annexation of these distant regions to the empire was impossible, and he proceeded to set up a puppet of his own, a Parthian of royal blood, named Parthaspates, to perpetuate, under Roman control, the national existence. Repairing to Ctesiphon, he assembled the people in the presence of his army, and calling the new candidate before him, placed the diadem on his head, with a magniloquent harangue on the splendour of his own achievements.¹

Defections in
his rear.

He consents to
restore a nominal
sovereignty
to Parthia.

The year 116 closed with this pretended settlement of Parthian affairs; but troubles were gathering about the conqueror's path, and his own energies were beginning, perhaps, to fail. The last exploit of Trajan was not a movement in advance, or the opening of another vista of triumphs, but an attempt, not wholly successful, to quell the defection of revolted subjects. The little fastness of Atra, the modern El Hadr, on the road from Ctesiphon to Singara, though contemptible in itself, was rendered formidable by the nature of the country in which it stood, a desert almost destitute of water, affording neither food for men nor fodder for horses. The natives consecrated this city to the Sun, and the fierce rays of that potent luminary striking on a dry and sandy soil, furnished a better defence than armies or fortifications. Trajan could approach the place only with a small body of soldiers, and though he succeeded in breaching in the walls, he was unable to penetrate them, and in succouring his baffled cohorts he was himself struck by an arrow. A thunder-

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 27-30.: The progress and successes of Trajan may be traced on his existing medals. See Eckhel and Francke, &c.

storm with rain and hail added to the confusion of the Romans; but it served, at least, to cover their retreat. Their food and drink were poisoned with swarms of noxious insects, and the chief was at length compelled to retire before the last and least formidable of his opponents.¹

Even under the command of Trajan, that gallant captain, an army with its legate had been cut in pieces, and the vic-

General revolt
of the Jews
throughout the
East.

A. D. 117.

A. U. 870.

*torious emperor's return was neither unmolested nor bloodless.*² Such is the testimony of Fronto, no favourable witness, perhaps, to the disasters which clouded the termination of the Parthian campaigns. Trajan was now anxious to make

his way to Rome. He still flattered himself that he had effected permanent conquests, and that the realms of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria beyond the Tigris would continue, under the control of his lieutenants, a lasting trophy of the Roman Terminus.³ But his own weakness was no doubt sensibly increasing. He had not provided for the succession, and with his habitual deference to the senate, he might shrink from the odium of making an appointment except in their presence, or with their concurrence. Meanwhile, within the borders of the empire, sympathetic movements of revolt responded pulse by pulse to the death spasms of Armenia and of Parthia. The Jewish insurrection, so long impend-

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 31. The position of Atra is fixed by the statement of Steph. Byzant. (ex Arrian. xvii. *Parthic.*). Ἀτραί πάλις μεταξύ Ευφράτου καὶ Τίγρητος. Francke, p. 293.

² Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* p. 338.: "sed etiam fortissimi imperatoris ductu legatus cum exercitu cæsus, et principis ad triumphum decedentis haudquaquam secura nec incruenta regressio." It will be understood that Fronto, writing under Trajan's successor, is not indisposed to point out the circumstances which detract from the great conqueror's unrivalled merits.

³ Rufus, *Breviar.* 14.: "ad extremum sub Trajano principe regi majoris Armeniæ diadema sublatum est, et per Trajanum Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria et Arabia provinciæ factæ sunt." Eutrop. viii. 3.: "Seleuciam et Ctesiphontem, Babylonem et Messenios, vicit ac tenuit: usque ad Indiæ fines et mare rubrum accessit: atque ibi tres provincias fecit, Armeniam, Assyriam, Mesopotamiam." Tac. *Ann.* i. 61.: "Rom. Imp. quod nunc ad mare rubrum patescit," i. e. the Persian Gulf.

ing, had burst forth in several quarters. The fall of Antioch was perhaps a signal for a final appeal to the Deliverer of Israel.¹ Once more the children of Moses and David believed that heaven had declared for them by outward tokens, and that their long-destined triumph was at hand. The Jewish population of Palestine and Syria had not yet recovered from its exhaustion, but the number of this people was very considerable in Cyprus, lying over against Antioch, where Augustus had granted to the first Herod the privilege of working the copper mines, whence the island derived its name. This rich and pleasant territory had afforded a refuge to the Jews of the continent through three generations of disturbance and alarm, and the Hebrew race was now probably not inferior there in number to the native Syrians or Greeks. On the first outburst of a Jewish revolt, the whole island fell into the hands of the insurgents, and became an arsenal and a rallying point for the insurrection, which soon spread over Egypt, Cyrene, and Mesopotamia. The leader of the revolt in Cyprus bore the name of Artemion, but we know no particulars of the war in this quarter, except that 240,000 of the native population are said to have fallen victims to the exterminating fury of the insurgents. When the rebellion was at last extinguished in blood, the Jews were forbidden thenceforth to set foot on the island; and even if driven thither by stress of weather, the penalty of death was mercilessly enforced against them.²

Sanguinary
outbreak in
Cyprus.

¹ Orosius sums up the great features of this wide-spread insurrection in a few vehement sentences: "incredibili deinde motu sub uno tempore Judæi, quasi rabie efferati, per diversas terrarum partes exarserunt. Nam et per totam Libyam adversus incolas atrocissima bella gesserunt: quæ adeo tunc interfectis cultoribus desolata est, ut nisi postea Hadrianus imperator collectas aliunde colonias illuc deduxisset, vacua penitus terra, abraso habitatore, mansisset. Ægyptum vero totam et Cyrenen et Thebaida cruentis seditionibus turbarant. In Alexandria autem commisso prælio victi et attriti sunt. In Mesopotamia quoque rebellantibus jussu Imperatoris bellum illatum est. Itaque multa millia eorum vasta cæde deleta sunt. Salaminem sane, urbem Cypri, interfectis omnibus incolis deleverunt." Oros. vii. 12.

² Dion, lxxviii. 32. The historian's father was governor of Cyprus, which

Throughout Mesopotamia the movements of disaffection to the Roman conquest were connected with this Jewish outbreak. Lusius Quietus, the best of Trajan's Jewish revolt in the Cyrenaica, generals, charged with the task of completing the reduction of the new province, was especially enjoined to clear it of this element of perpetual resistance.¹ On the coast of Libya the contest assumed a still more formidable character. The Jewish population of the Cyrenaica outnumbered the natives, and the fanaticism which had been aroused by the pretended mission of Jonathan was fanned into a fiercer flame by a chief, who seems to have borne the double name of Andreas Lucullus.² Here the insurgents were for a time triumphant, and disgraced their success by the cruelties they committed on the surprised and overpowered Cyrenians; for the hostility of the Jews in these parts was directed less against the central government and the Roman residents, than the native race with whom they always dwelt in habits of mutual animosity; of these 220,000 are said to have perished, many of them in torments inflicted with cannibal ferocity. After every allowance for the exaggeration usual in such case, there seems no reason to question the general truth of these charges against the insurgents, and in as far as their barbarity was wreaked on the natives rather than on the Romans, the excuse of despair, and even of revenge, has no place. From Cyrene the flame quickly spread to Egypt. The prefect Lupus was worsted in several encounters, and shut up within the walls of Alexandria, where, however, he indemnified himself for his losses by the massacre of the Jewish residents. His position and in Egypt. was still precarious, when Martius Turbo came

was attached to the province of Cilicia, and the statement in the text seems to have been derived from special sources.

¹ Dion, lxxviii. 33.: Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 2.: δ δὲ αὐτοκράτωρ ὑποπτεύσας καὶ τοῖς ἐν Μεσοποταμίᾳ Ἰουδαίους ἐπιθρῆσθαι τοῖς ἀντόθι, Λουκίῳ Κνήτῳ προ-
σέταξεν ἐκκαθῆραι τῆς ἐπαρχίας αὐτοῦς.

² Dion calls him "Andreas," and Eusebius "Lucuas," which may be rendered by "Lucullus."

from Trajan to the rescue, and the frantic resistance of the rebels was at last overcome after a protracted resistance, and in a series of engagements. The historian Appian, in speaking of the expiatory chapel which was dedicated to Pompeius at the foot of Mount Casius, remarks incidentally, *This little shrine was destroyed in our own time by the Jews, in the internecine war which Trajan waged against them.*¹ Such was the fury on the one side, such the vengeance on the other.

The report of these internal troubles cast a deep gloom over Trajan's spirit. He was conscious that he had no longer the strength to contend in person against them, and it was no doubt with bitter sorrow that he took leave of his armies at Antioch, and handed over to his lieutenants the comrades of so many well-fought fields.

Trajan returns to Antioch.

As the summer advanced, he turned his face again westward; but his robust constitution had been shattered by fatigue; possibly the chagrin

His sickness on his return to Rome.

of his last repulse had aggravated the pestilential vapours of Atræ. According to some accounts, he fancied himself suffering from poison; but the virus, if such there were, was infused into his system by the air and the climate, not by the hand of man. His disorder appears to have assumed the form of dropsy. He became rapidly worse, and could proceed no further than Selinus in Cilicia, where he expired on one of the first days of August. His

and death at Selinus.

reign extended beyond the term of any of his predecessors since Tiberius, numbered nineteen years and a half, and he had reached the age of sixty-five years, spent in almost uninterrupted activity. Trajan was the first of the Cæsars who had met his death at a distance from Rome and Italy, the first whose life had been cut short in the actual service of his country. Such a fate deserved to be signalized by an extraordinary distinction. The charred remains of the great-

¹ Salvador refers to this passage (*Bell. Civ. ii. 90.*) with the object of signalizing the mercilessness of the Romans; but this is the device of an advocate, and does not befit the impartiality of history.

est of the emperors were conveyed to Rome, and suffered to repose in a golden urn, at the foot of his own column, within the precincts of the city.¹

But the thread of imperial life could hardly snap without a jar which would be felt throughout the whole extent of the empire. Trajan, like Alexander, had been cut off suddenly in the far East, and, like Alexander, he had left no avowed successor. Several of his generals abroad might advance nearly equal claims to the sword of Trajan; some of the senators at home might deem themselves not unworthy of the purple of Nerva. On every side there was an army or a faction ready to devote itself to the service of its favourite or its champion. The provinces lately annexed were at the same time in a state of ominous agitation; along one half of the frontiers, Britons, Germans, and Sarmatians were mustering their forces for invasion; a virulent insurrection was still glowing throughout a large portion of the empire. Nevertheless the compact body of the Roman commonwealth was still held firmly together by its inherent self-attraction. There was no tendency to split in pieces, as in the ill-cemented masses of the Macedonian conquest; and the presence of mind of a clever woman was well employed in effecting the peaceful transfer of power, and relieving the state from the stress of disruption.

Of the accession of Publius Ælius Hadrianus to the empire; of the means by which it was effected; of the character and reputation he brought with him to the throne; of the first measures of his reign, by which he renounced the latest conquests of his predecessor, while he put forth all his power to retain the realms bequeathed him from an earlier period, I shall speak at large hereafter. It will be well to return, in concluding our pres-

Perils of the empire, and question of the succession.

Trajan fortunate in the moment of his death.

¹ Eutropius, viii. 5.: "solus omnium intra urbem sepultus est." The same distinction had been accorded to Julius Cæsar: "ossa ejus collocata in urna aurea in foro quod ædificavit sub columna sita sunt." Dion, lxi. 2.: τὰ δὲ τοῦ Τραϊανοῦ ὀστά ἐν τῇ κλισίᾳ αὐτοῦ κατετίθη. The column seems to stand precisely on the line of the Servian wall.

ent review of Eastern affairs, to the great Jewish insurrection, and the important consequences which followed from it. Trajan was surely fortunate in the moment of his death. Vexed as he doubtless was, by the frustration of his grand designs for incorporating the Parthian monarchy with the Roman, and fulfilling the idea of universal empire which had flitted through the mind of Pompeius or Julius, but had been deliberately rejected by Augustus and Vespasian, his proud spirit would have been broken indeed, had he lived to witness the difficulties in which Rome was plunged at his death, the spread of the Jewish revolt in Asia and Palestine, the aggressions of the Moors, the Scythians, and the Britons at the most distant points of his dominions.¹ The momentary success of the insurgents of Cyprus and Cyrene had prompted a general assurance that the conquering race was no longer invincible, and the last great triumphs of its legions were followed by a rebound of fortune still more momentous. The first act of the new reign was the formal relinquishment of the new provinces beyond the Euphrates.² The Parthian tottered back with feeble step to his accustomed frontiers. Arabia was left unmolested; India was no longer menaced. Armenia found herself once more suspended between two rival empires, of which the one was too weak to seize, the other too weak to retain her. All the forces of Rome in the East were now set free to complete the suppression of the Jewish disturbances. The flames of insurrection which had broken out

Hadrian relinquishes the new provinces beyond the Euphrates.

¹ Spartian, *Hadrian*. 5.: "deficientibus his nationibus quas Trajanus subegerat, Mauri lacescebant, Sarmatæ bellum inferebant, Britanni teneri sub Romana ditone non poterant, Ægyptus seditionibus urgebatur, Lycia denique ac Palæstina rebelles animos efferebant."

² Spartian, l. c.: "quare omnia trans Euphratem ac Tigrim reliquit, exemplo ut dicebat Catonis, qui Macedonas liberos pronuntiavit quia teneri non poterant." See Livy, xlv. 18., who however gives a different account of the matter. Of Hadrian's relinquishment of Dacia I shall speak later. There seems no reason whatever for attributing to jealousy of Trajan measures which were imperatively demanded by the circumstances of the times. Comp. Eutrop. viii. 3. Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* p. 244.

in so many remote quarters were concentrated, and burnt more fiercely than ever, in the ancient centre of the Jewish nationality. Martius Turbo, appointed to command in Palestine, was equally amazed at the fanaticism and the numbers of people whose faith had been mocked, whose hopes frustrated, whose young men had been decimated, whose old men, women and children, had been enslaved and exiled. Under the teaching of the doctors of Tiberias faith had been cherished, and hope had revived. Despised and unmolested for fifty years, a new generation had risen from the soil of their ancestors, recruited by the multitudes who flocked homewards year by year, with an unextinguishable love of country, and reinforced by the fugitives from many scenes of persecution, all animated with a growing conviction that the last struggle of their race was at hand, to be contested on the site of their old historic triumphs.

It is not perhaps wholly fanciful to imagine that the Jewish leaders, after the fall of their city and temple, and the great dispersion of their people, deliberately invented new means for maintaining their cherished nationality. Their conquerors, as they might observe, were scattered, like themselves, over the face of the globe, and abode wherever they conquered; but the laws, the manners, and the traditions of Rome were preserved almost intact amidst alien races by the consciousness that there existed a visible centre of their nation, the source, as it were, to which they might repair to draw the waters of political life. But the dispersion of the Jews seemed the more irremediable, as the destruction of their central home was complete. To preserve the existence of their nation one other way presented itself. In their sacred books they retained a common bond of law and doctrine, such as no other people could boast. In those venerated records they possessed, whether on the Tiber or the Euphrates, an elixir of unrivalled virtue. With a sudden revulsion of feeling, the popular orators and captains betook

Insurrection of
the Jews in
Palestine.

The Jewish
nationality pre-
served by the
teaching of the
Jewish doctors
at Tiberias.

themselves to the study of the law, its history and antiquities, its actual text and its inner meaning. The schools of Tiberias resounded with debate on the rival principles of interpretation, the ancient and the modern, the stricter and the laxer, known respectively by the names of their teachers, Schammai and Hillel. The doctors decided in favour of the more accommodating system, by which the stern exclusiveness of the original letter was extenuated, and the law of the rude tribes of Palestine moulded to the varied taste and temper of a cosmopolitan society, while the text itself was embalmed in the Masora, an elaborate system of punctuation and notation, to every particle of which, to ensure its uncorrupted preservation, a mystical significance was attached. By this curious contrivance the letter of the Law, the charter of Judaism, was sanctified for ever, while its spirit was remodelled to the exigencies of the present or the future, till it would have been no longer recognised by its authors, or even by very recent disciples. To this new learning of traditions and glosses the ardent youth of the nation devoted itself with a fanaticism not less vehement than that which had fought and bled half a century before. The name of the Rabbi Akiba is preserved as a type of the hierophant of restored Judaism. The stories respecting him are best expounded as myths and figures. He reached, it was said, the age of a hundred and twenty years, the period assigned in the sacred records to his prototype the lawgiver Moses. Like David, in his youth he kept sheep on the mountains; like Jacob, he served a master, a rich citizen of Jerusalem, for Jerusalem in his youth was still standing. His master's daughter cast the eyes of affection upon him, and offered him a secret marriage; but this damsel was no other than Jerusalem itself, so often imaged to the mind of the Jewish people by the figure of a maiden, a wife, or a widow. This mystic bride required him to repair to the schools, acquire knowledge and wisdom, surround himself with disciples; and such, as we have seen, was the actual policy of the new defenders of Judaism. The

Typical character of the Rabbi Akiba.

damsel was rebuked by her indignant father; but when after the lapse of twelve years Akiba returned to claim his bride with twelve thousand scholars at his heels, he overheard her replying, that long as he had been absent she only wished him to prolong his stay twice over, so as to double his knowledge; whereupon he returned patiently to his studies, and frequented the schools twelve years longer. Twice twelve years thus past, he returned once more with twice twelve thousand disciples, and then his wife received him joyfully, and covered as she was with rags, an outcast and a beggar, he presented her to his astonished followers as the being to whom he owed his wisdom, his fame and his fortune. Such were the legends with which the new learning was consecrated to the defence of Jewish nationality.¹

The concentration of the Roman forces on the soil of Palestine seems to have repressed for a season all overt attempts at insurrection. The Jewish leaders restrained their followers from action, as long as it was possible to feed their spirit with hopes only. It was not till about the fourteenth year of Hadrian's reign that the final revolt broke out, but it will be convenient to embrace it in our present review of the long struggle of the nation throughout the regions in which it was dispersed. When the Jews of Palestine launched forth upon the war, the doctor Akiba gave place to the warrior Barcochebas. This gallant warrior, the last of the national heroes, received or assumed his title, *the Son of the Star*, given successively to several leaders of the Jewish people, in token of the fanatic expectations of divine deliverance by which his countrymen did not yet cease to be animated.² Many were the legends which declared this champion's claims to the leadership of the national cause. His size and strength were vaunted as more than human; *it was the arm of God, not of man*, said Hadrian,—when he saw at last the

Barcochebas,
the son of a
star, appointed
leader of the
Jews.

A. D. 131.
A. U. 884.

¹ Salvador, *Domination Romaine en Judée*, ii. 547, foll.

² The allusion was to the prophecy of Balaam, *Numbers*, xxiv. 17.: Comp. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 8.

corpse encircled by a serpent, *that could alone strike down the giant*. Flame and smoke were seen to issue from his lips in speaking, a portent which was rationalized centuries later into a mere conjuror's artifice.¹ The concourse of the Jewish nation at his summons was symbolized, with a curious reference to the prevalent idea of Israel as a school and the Law as a master, by the story that at Bethar, the appointed rendezvous and last stronghold of the national defence, were four hundred academies, each ruled by four hundred teachers, each teacher boasting a class of four hundred pupils. Akiba, now at the extreme point of his protracted existence, like Samuel of old, nominated the new David to the chiefship of the people. He girded Barcochebas with the sword of Jehovah, placed the staff of command in his hand, and held himself the stirrup by which he vaulted into the saddle.²

The last revolt of the Jewish people was precipitated apparently by the increased severity of the measures which the rebellion under Trajan had drawn down. They complained that Hadrian had enrolled himself as a proselyte of the Law, and were doubly incensed against him as a persecutor and a renegade. This assertion indeed may have no foundation; on the other hand, it is not unlikely that this prince, a curious explorer of religious opinions, had sought initiation into some of the mysteries of the Jewish faith and ritual. But however this may be, he gave them mortal offence by perceiving the clear distinction between Judaism and Christianity, and by forbidding the Jews to sojourn in the town which he was again raising on the ruins of Jerusalem, while he allowed free access to their rivals. He is said to have even prohibited the rite of circumcision, by which they jealously maintained

Defeat of the
Jews, and
death of Barco-
chebas.

A. D. 132.
A. U. 385.

¹ The statement rests on the authority of St. Jerome, who derides the imposture with fanatical bitterness. *In Rufin.* iii. (tom. iv. pars 2. p. 466. ed. 1706): "ut ille Barcochebas auctor seditionis Judaicæ stipulam in ore succensam anhelitu ventilabat, ut flammæ evomere putaretur."

² Salvador, ii. 569.; with citations from the Talmud.

their separation from the nations of the West. At last, when they rose in arms, he sent his best Generals against them. Tinnius Rufus was long baffled, and often defeated; but Julius Severus, following the tactics of Vespasian, constantly refused the battle they offered him, and reduced their strongholds in succession by superior discipline and resources.¹ Barcochebas struggled with the obstinacy of despair. Every excess of cruelty was committed on both sides, and it is well perhaps that the details of this mortal spasm are almost wholly lost to us. The later Christian writers, while they allude with unseemly exultation to the overthrow of one inveterate enemy by another, who proved himself in the end not less inveterate, affirmed that the barbarities of the Jewish leader were mainly directed against themselves. On such interested assertions we shall place little reliance. In the counter-narrative of the Jews even the name of Christian is contemptuously disregarded. It relates, however, how at the storming of Bethar, when Barcochebas perished in the field, ten of the most learned of the Rabbis were taken and put cruelly to death, while Akiba, reserved to expire last, and torn in pieces with hot pincers, continued to attest the great principle of the Jewish doctrine, still exclaiming in his death throes, *Jehovah Erhad; God is one.*²

The Jews who fell in these their latest combats are counted by hundreds of thousands, and we may conclude that the suppression of the revolt was followed by sanguinary proscriptions, by wholesale captivity, and general banishment.³ The dispersion of the unhappy race, particularly in the West, was now complete and final. The sacred soil of Jerusalem was occupied by a Roman colony, which received the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, with reference to the

Foundation of
the colony of
*Ælia Capito-
lina*, and desec-
ration of the
holy places of
Jerusalem.

A. D. 133.

A. U. 886.

¹ Dion, lxi. 13. A. D. 132-135; A. U. 885-888. Hadrian, 16-19.

² Salvador, ii. 577.

³ Dion specifies the exact number of the Jewish people slain in battle at 580,000, while, as he says, the multitudes that perished by famine and pestilence exceeded all calculation. These statements are probably as extravagant

emperor who founded it, and to the supreme God of the pagan mythology, installed on the desecrated summits of Zion and Moriah. The fane of Jupiter was erected on the site of the holy Temple, and a shrine of Venus flaunted, we are assured, on the very spot hallowed to Christians by our Lord's crucifixion.¹ But Hadrian had no purpose of insulting the disciples of Jesus, and this desecration, if the tradition be true, was probably accidental. A Jewish legend affirms that the figure of a swine was sculptured, in bitter mockery, over a gate of the new city. The Jews have retorted with equal scorn that the effigy of the unclean animal, which represented to their minds every low and bestial appetite, was a fitting emblem of the colony and its founder, of the lewd worship of its gods, and the vile propensities of its emperor.²

The fancy of later Christian writers, that Hadrian regarded their co-religionists with special consideration, seems founded on a misconception. We hear, indeed, of the graciousness with which he allowed them, among other sectarians, to defend their usages and expound their doctrines in his presence; and doubtless his curiosity, if no worthier feeling, was moved by the fact, which he fully appreciated, of the interest they excited in certain quarters of the empire. But there is no evidence that his favour extended further than to the recognition of their independence of the Jews, from whom they now formally separated themselves, and the discouragement of the local persecutions to which they were occasionally subjected.³

Final separation of the Christians from the Jews.

as those of Josephus. Dion adds, however, a singular circumstance, if true, with reference to the losses of the Romans, namely, that in his dispatches to the senate, the emperor was constrained to omit the usual formula: "If you and yours are well, it is well; I and my army are well." Dion, lxi. 14.

¹ This last fact, for which we are referred to Epiphanius, *De mens.* 14., is allowed to be doubtful by Gregorovius, *Hadr.* p. 56.

² Salvador, ii. 583.

³ Orosius, vii. 13., expresses the favourable opinion commonly entertained of this emperor by the Christians, on the ground that he relieved them from persecution, and avenged them on the cruel Barcochebas: "præcepitque ne cui

So far the bigoted hostility of their enemies was overruled at last in their favour. In another way they learnt to profit by the example of their rivals. From the recent policy of the Jews they might understand the advantage to a scattered community, without a local centre or a political status, of erecting in a volume of sacred records their acknowledged standard of faith and practice. The Scriptures of the New Testament, like the Mischna of the Jewish Rabbis, took the place of the Holy of Holies as the tabernacle of their God, and the pledge of their union with Him. The canon of their sacred books, however casual its apparent formation, was indeed a providential development. The habitual references of bishops and doctors to the words of their Founder, and the writings of his first disciples, guided them to the proper sources of their faith, and taught them justly to discriminate the genuine from the spurious. Meagre as are the remains of Christian literature of the second century, they tend to confirm our assurance that the Scriptures of the New Dispensation were known and recognized as divine at that early period, and that the Church of Christ, the future mistress of the world, was already become a great social fact, an empire within the empire.

Judæo intrandi Hierosolymam esset licentia, Christianis tantum civitate permissa." On the other hand Sulp. Severus speaks very bitterly of Hadrian: "qua tempestate Hadrianus, existimans se Christianam fidem *loci injuria* perempturum, et in templo ac loco Dominicæ passionis demonum simulacra constituit. Et quia Christiani ex Judæis potissimum putabantur (namque tum Hierosolymæ non nisi ex circumcisione habebat ecclesia sacerdotem), militum cohortem custodias in perpetuum agitare jussit, quæ *Judeos omnes* Hierosolymæ aditu arceret. Quod quidem Christianæ fidei proficiebat, quia tum pene omnes Christum Deum *sub observatione legis* credebant. . . . Ita tum primum Marcus ex gentibus apud Hierosolymam episcopus fuit." *Hist. Sacr.* ii. 45. This last fact is taken from Eusebius, who gives a catalogue of the twelve bishops, all of the circumcision, who had previously presided over the church at Jerusalem. *Hist. Eccl.* i. c.

CHAPTER LXVI.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF HADRIAN.—HIS EDUCATION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.—HIS RISE UNDER TRAJAN'S GUARDIANSHIP.—HIS ALLEGED ADOPTION AND SUCCESSION.—HE ABANDONS TRAJAN'S CONQUESTS IN THE EAST.—HIS CAMPAIGN IN MÆSIA, A. D. 118.—SUPPRESSION OF A CONSPIRACY AGAINST HIM.—HE COURTS THE SENATE AND THE PEOPLE.—HADRIAN'S FIRST PROGRESS.—HE VISITS GAUL, GERMANY, SPAIN, MAURETANIA, CONFERS WITH THE KING OF PARTHIA, VISITS ATHENS, SICILY, AND CARTHAGE, A. D. 119–123.—HIS SECOND PROGRESS: HE RESIDES AT ATHENS, ALEXANDRIA, AND ANTIOCH: CHARACTER OF LEARNING AND SOCIETY AT THESE CITIES RESPECTIVELY: HE REVISITS ATHENS, AND RETURNS FINALLY TO ROME, A. D. 125–134.—HIS BUILDINGS AT ROME.—ADOPTION OF CRONIUS VERUS, A. D. 135, WHO DIES PREMATURELY.—ADOPTION OF AURELIUS ANTONINUS, A. D. 138, WHO ADOPTS ANNIUS VERUS AND L. VERUS.—INFIRMITIES AND DEATH OF HADRIAN, A. D. 138.—HIS CHARACTER AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE.—(A. D. 117–138: A. U. 870–891.)

THE family of the man who had now attained the sovereignty of the Roman people, was derived from the obscure municipality of Hadria in Picenum, an offshoot from the Etruscan city of Cisalpine Gaul which gave its name to the Adriatic sea.¹ Three centuries earlier, a direct ancestor had visited Spain in the

Birth and parentage of the emperor Hadrian.

¹ We arrive, with the reign of Hadrian, at the series of imperial biographies which goes under the name of the *Historia Augusta*. The writers, six in number, are known as Spartianus, Capitolinus, Gallicanus, Lampridius, Trebellius and Vopiscus. It comprises, with one short interval, an account of the emperors from the death of Trajan to the accession of Diocletian, under whom, or not long after, the several pieces seem to have been written. Of the writers themselves little or nothing is known, nor are the limits of their respective authorship in all cases satisfactorily determined. Hence Gibbon preferred to cite them indiscriminately under the common title of the *Augustan History*. Of their value a good estimate is given by Professor Ramsay in *Smith's Dictionary Class. Biograph.* They follow the type of the biographies of Suetonius,

armies of the Scipios, and had settled in the Roman colony of Italica, where his descendants continued to retain, in the surname of Hadrianus, a memorial of the place whence they originally sprang. The Ælian Gens, with which the emperor claimed connexion, was an ancient stem, which had thrown off many illustrious branches, distinguished in the records of the plebeian nobility of Rome. But the pride of historic descent was already becoming faint among the Romans. The new men, raised by imperial favour from the lowest class of citizens, and even from the ranks of foreign freedmen, or thrown up by the mutations of fortune from their decent obscurity in the provinces, had so far outnumbered the remnant of really ancient families, as even to cast a slur on the genuine claims of birth and ancestral dignity. The complacent feelings with which a few scions of the old aristocracy might still regard their historic origin, must have been sorely lacerated by the scorn with which they were chastised by Juvenal. In branding their pretensions as weak and even criminal, he spoke, as they well knew, the real sentiments of the day.¹ Accordingly Hadrian's flatterers made apparently no effort to prove, by forced or fancied genealogies, that their patron deserved by his birth a primacy of honour among his countrymen. They were content that he

and we may perhaps rely upon them generally for their account of the salient events of history, and their views of character; but we must guard against the trifling and incredible anecdotes with which they abound, and acknowledge their inferiority in credit even to the biographies of the Cæsars.

¹ Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. : "Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa Fortuna . . . miserum est aliorum incumbere famæ . . . ergo cavebis. Et metues, ne tu sis Creticus aut Camerinus."

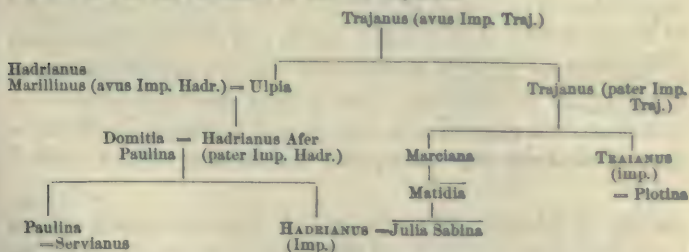
The satirist expresses the common sense and utilitarian logic of his day, when the people were awakening from many ancient illusions, the belief in which, nevertheless, had constituted the strength of the nation. Such a diatribe as his eighth satire is a startling sign of the age of transition to which it belonged. We cannot imagine its being written even a century earlier. Tiberius, and possibly Augustus, would have rejoiced at such a blow administered to the haughty aristocracy, which they flattered and cajoled; but the times were not then ripe for it. It would have been equally out of date a century later.

should be judged by his personal merits, and these, as it proved, were unquestionably such as could be little enhanced by the fairest gifts of fortune. It is enough, then, to say that P. Ælius Hadrianus was the son of Hadrianus Afer, a first cousin of Trajan. His mother was a Domitia Paulina of Gades. His grandfather Marillinus was the first of the family who attained the dignity of a senator, and his sister Paulina was united to a man of great distinction at Rome, many years older than herself, named Servianus. Hadrian was born at Rome, Jan. 24, A. D. 76 (A. U. 829), in the seventh consulship of Vespasian.¹

Hadrian's childhood was spent probably at Rome, amidst the high society of the capital; and when he was left an orphan at the age of ten years, he was taken under the guardianship of Trajan, then occupying the post of prætorian præfect, and of a knight of good family, named Attianus.² For five years he was placed under the fashionable teachers of letters and philosophy in Greece, and the success which attended him in these and other kindred studies, the boast of the city of Minerva, gained him the familiar nickname of Græculus.³

His education
and accomplish-
ments.

¹ Spartian, *Hadrian*. i. It will be convenient to the reader to have a synoptical view of the connexion of the two emperors.



² Spartian, *Hadr.* l. c.: Dion, lxi. 1. The MSS. fluctuate between the names Attianus and Tatianus.

³ Spartian, l. c. This writer, from whose confused statements we gather our information about Hadrian's early career, does not expressly say that he was educated at Athens: "quintodecimo anno ad patriam rediit;" by which I understand "Rome," where he was born, where he soon after this period filled

*He became imbued, we are assured, with the true spirit of the Athenians, and not only acquired their language, but rivalled them in all their special accomplishments, in singing, in playing, in medicine, in mathematics, in painting and in sculpture, in which he nearly equalled a Polycletus and a Euphranor.*¹ *His memory, it is added, was prodigious, his application incredible. He was various and versatile in his tastes; his interests were manifold and many-sided. He was smart in attack, and ready in reply with argument, abuse, or banter.* But the activity of his body equalled that of his mind, and besides the ordinary training in arms and feats of agility which was proper to his age and position, he devoted himself with ardour to the toils and excitement of the chase. The high places of Roman society had seen no such universal talents since those of the incomparable Julius, and Hadrian might rival, moreover, the son of Venus himself in the majestic beauty of his person, and the gracefulness of his manners. We know, unfortunately, too little of his real character to judge of the points in which his inferiority actually consisted, and why it is that the first of the Cæsars so naturally takes his place in the highest rank of genius, while the cleverest of his successors is hardly set above the second; but this, at least, we may observe, that the mere acquisition of manifold knowledge was far easier in the time of Hadrian than at the earlier epoch, and that in a generation of intellectual dwarfs, a moderate stature might command extravagant admiration. Yet it may fairly be concluded that the first man of one age would probably have made himself first in any other, and the rivalry of a Cicero, a

the office of "decemvir litibus dijudicandis." Casaubon thinks it refers to Italica, the home of his family, and gravely asks, "an quia Romæ natus quidem Hadrianus sed Italicæ conceptus?" If Hadrian so returned to Rome in his fifteenth year, he must have been educated elsewhere, and therefore, as we may conclude, in Greece.

¹ Victor, *Epit.* 28.: "proxime Polycletos et Euphranoras." In the text I have extracted only a specimen of the long list of excellences enumerated by the writer.

Varro, and a Sulpicius might have elevated Hadrian to the acknowledged preëminence of Julius himself.

But scholastic training and academic acquirements, unaccompanied by active life, might have placed a pedant, a second Claudius, on the throne. For such a completion of the imperial character the times afforded Hadrian the widest scope. From his early studies he was summoned to a civil office in Rome, under the eye of influential patrons, and with the fairest prospect of advancement. His industry did justice to his abilities, and both to his opportunities. Meanwhile his guardian Trajan was placed in high command on the frontiers, and Hadrian, attached perhaps to his staff or cohorts, served in Upper Germany, and attained the rank of tribune in the army of Pannonia.¹ At this period, that is, towards the end of Domitian's reign, while the rise even of his patron was beyond the reach of conjecture, he was confirmed by a soothsayer in the presage of a lofty destiny, which had been already discovered for him at his birth.² The path of fortune speedily opened to him. When Trajan was adopted by Nerva at Rome, the army on the Danube deputed Hadrian

He rises, under Trajan's patronage, to the consulship.

¹ Hadrian was a tribune of the Second Legio Adjutrix, which, as Dion informs us, was stationed in Lower Pannonia, and transferred in the latter years of Domitian to Lower Mæsia. Dion, lxx. 24.; Spartian, *Hadrian*. 2. This legion had been levied by Vespasian, together with the Fourth Flavia and the Sixteenth Flavia Firma. Dion, l. c.; Tac. *Hist.* iv. 68. See Marquardt (*Becker's Alterthümer*, iii. 2. p. 355.). These levies were employed to repress the inroads of the Sarmatians and the menaces of the Parthians.

² According to the story repeated by Spartianus, he consulted the "*Sortes Virgilianæ*," and opened the mystic volume on the lines—

"Quis procul ille autem ramis insignis olivæ
Sacra ferens? nosco crines incanaque menta
Regis Romani."

The olive typified the Athenian accomplishments of Hadrian; the beard, not usually worn at this time by the Romans, was an appendage brought also from Greece. Ammianus Marcellinus (xxii. 12.) repeats a strange legend that Hadrian caused the mouth of the Delphic cavern to be closed with large stones, that none after him might derive from the oracle the expectation of empire.

to convey their congratulations to the new Emperor at his quarters on the Rhine. The young man was eager to execute so agreeable a mission; but his brother-in-law Servianus, who, it seems, had already spitefully divulged his excesses and debts to his guardian, tried hard to detain him, and would have frustrated it by getting his chariot to be broken on the way. But Hadrian was not to be thus baffled. Leaving his disabled vehicle on the road, and continuing his journey on foot without a moment's delay, till he could obtain the means of more expeditious travelling, he succeeded in outstripping the courier sent by Servianus to anticipate him.¹ Trajan received him cordially, employed and trusted him. But he was still more distinguished by the favour of Plotina, which secured him Sabina, the daughter of Matidia, in marriage; though Trajan himself, it was said, was indisposed to the match, which might seem to savour too much of a political adoption. From this time, however, Hadrian's advancement became, as might be expected, more rapid.

A. D. 101.

A. U. 854.

Trajan, now sole emperor, and in his fourth consulship, appointed him quæstor, in which capacity he recited the prince's messages to the senate, and is said to have betrayed but an imperfect command of the Roman accent, which he had lost by almost constant absence from the city since his childhood. In the same year he attended the emperor in the first Dacian expedition, and he was wont to excuse his indulgence in wine during his sojourn in the camp by pretending that he was required to follow his general's example. After attaining the dignity, now merely nominal, of Tribune of the Plebs, he was entrusted in the second Dacian war with the command of the First Minervian legion, and his services were acknowledged by the present of a diamond ring, which Trajan had himself received from Nerva. This he complacently regarded as a pledge, or at least an augury of the imperial succession. The ædileship he was allowed to waive on account of his

¹ Spartian, *Had.* l. c.

military employments; but he succeeded in due course to the prætorship, again repaired to the provinces, and as governor of Lower Pannonia checked an inroad of the Sarmatians. The strictness of his discipline, and the firmness of his civil administration here, recommended him for the last and highest dignity a subject could attain, and during Trajan's residence in Rome he was appointed consul suffect. To the emperor and his consort he continued constantly to attach himself; he took part in Trajan's expedition into the East, and through the interest of Plotina received the prefecture of Syria. He was finally appointed consul a second time, but again suffect, in the year 117.

A. D. 117.
A. U. 870.

This appointment did not require his presence in Rome, and he was resident at Antioch as the seat of his government at the moment of his patron's decease.¹

Such were the steps in the career of honours accomplished by this fortunate aspirant; and it is interesting to remark how nearly they correspond with the march of a Lucullus or a Cicero in the free state. So faithfully did the outward form of the Roman government in the ninth century, after a hundred and sixty years of monarchy, retain the impress of the days of the republic.² In one, however, who occupied the place of Hadrian about the emperor, this succession of honours was peculiarly significant. Sura, Trajan's chief adviser, could distinctly assure him that he was destined for adoption, and all Rome began to designate him as heir to the empire, the nobles vying with one another in paying court to him. On Sura's death he found himself possessed of a still larger share of his prince's confidence, which was frivolously ascribed by some observers, who chose to overlook the natural reasons for it, to the good service he rendered him in composing his

Hadrian popularly designated heir to the empire.

¹ Spartian, *Hadrian*. l. c.

² The only discrepancy lay in the innovation of the suffect consulship, but outwardly there was little difference in Roman eyes between the honorary office of one or two months and the annual magistracy. The spirit of the two institutions was indeed widely at variance.

speeches. Still more maliciously did they insinuate that he stood too high in the favour of Plotina; and finally, as if still unsatisfied, they did not scruple to pretend that he won the freedmen of the palace to his interests by the basest compliances.¹ So feeble was the character of the Romans at this period; such the petty conceptions they now commonly entertained of the sciences of human conduct.

Trajan had died childless, and whatever hopes or expectations might have been formed in any quarter, he had adopted no heir, nor indicated by any overt act a successor to the purple. Sufficient as he had felt himself, even in his declining years, for the whole weight of the empire, he had placed no colleague at his side to train him for independent sovereignty. About the future succession there were as many rumours as there were interests. The senate and the civilians of the capital leant to the expectation that their prince intended to nominate Neratius Priscus, a learned jurist and an experienced administrator. The soldiers whispered the name of Lusius Quietus, the most distinguished of their captains, who would have been as acceptable to the camps as Priscus to the city. But Lusius, though he had commanded Roman armies, though he had been raised for a month to the consulship, and now governed a province, was neither a citizen nor even a provincial by origin, but only a Moorish chieftain, who had volunteered into the Roman service at the head of a band of mercenaries.² Such an adoption would have been an outrage on the senate, with which Trajan had acted in harmony throughout his reign, and to which, according to another report, he proposed to leave the free choice of its future ruler. Some, indeed, surmised that as he sought to follow the great Alexander in his military career, so he might designedly leave the empire as the prize of *the worthiest*: but such speculators forgot that while the senate alone claimed the legal right of appoint-

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 3. 4. : Dion, lxi. 1.

² Little weight can be attached to the intimation of Themistius (*Orat.* xvi.) that Trajan designed this man for his successor.

ment, the army exercised actual power, and that it was perilous to leave such a prize to be contended for by such antagonists. It seems more likely that Trajan's genuine respect for his council made him hesitate; and his anxiety, when sensible of the inroads of disease, to return to Rome, may indicate a wish to make his final arrangements in concert with it. But the moment of nomination had been too long delayed. In the last hours of mortal infirmity the master of the Roman world might be no longer master of himself. He might become the sport of a favourite or a woman, of his kinsman or his consort. It is true that in the person of Hadrian almost every claim was united. He was in the vigour of his age, of fine personal appearance, admirably accomplished, nor untried as an officer; he had filled the highest civil posts, and occupied at the moment the most important of all charges, the prefecture of Syria. He was doubly connected with Trajan, as his cousin in blood, and his niece's husband. Yet all these claims might have pleaded in vain for him now, as hitherto, but for the favour of the empress, who felt the liveliest concern in a question which so nearly touched her own position and interests. From the moment that Trajan quitted Antioch, through the mournful stages of the journey to Selinus, she had not ceased to intercede for Hadrian's adoption. Such influence, thus exerted, under whatever motive, might easily prevail. There seems no reason to question the assertion that at Plotina's instigation Trajan, almost in his last moments, and when he could no longer hold a pen (if it be true that his name was actually subscribed by her hand to the instrument), addressed to the senate a declaration that he had adopted Hadrian, subject only to its gracious confirmation. The day of the emperor's decease is not accurately known; it was imagined that the event was concealed for a brief interval to favour Plotina's contrivance. On the 9th of August, we are told, Hadrian received at Antioch the intelligence of his adoption. Two days later his parent's death was notified to him, and the

Alleged adoption of Hadrian by Trajan on his death-bed.

legions, to which he immediately addressed himself, accepted him without hesitation. But it was impossible to establish beyond cavil the genuineness of this sudden adoption, and Dion could cite the authority of his own father, who was at a later period governor of Cilicia, for his assertion that it was wholly fictitious. According to a rumour recorded in the fourth century, Trajan had already ceased to breathe, when Plotina removed the body, placed a confidential servant on the couch, drew the curtains close, and summoned witnesses into the chamber, who heard a feeble moan, as of their dying master, declaring that he adopted as his son, and nominated as his successor, his trusty and well-beloved kinsman, Publius Ælius Hadrianus.¹

The troops at Antioch received their hero's last commands with respectful acquiescence; but the insecurity which Hadrian himself felt seems to be marked by the donative, of twice the usual amount, with which he hastened to gratify them.² But if Lusius Quietus and Martius Turbo had higher claims on their regard, as military leaders, these men were absent at the moment from headquarters, and the timely liberality of Plotina's favourite carried the day against them. Hadrian was equally politic, and not less successful in his overtures to the senate. To that body he professed the most entire deference, excusing himself for having yielded to the precipitate greetings of the soldiers, whom it was impossible, he

Hadrian's succession confirmed by the senate and the army.

¹ Dion, *lxi.* 1.; Spartian, *Had.* 4.; Victor, *Cæs.* 13.

² Spartian, *Had.* 5.: "ob auspicia imperii." The donative to the soldiers was originally a gift from the captured booty on the occasion of a triumph. Octavius, after the battle of Mutina, presented each of his soldiers with 10,000 H. S. or about 80*l.* He gave other sums, sometimes larger, sometimes smaller, on different occasions. Caius was the first who gave a donative on his accession; this was only 1000 H. S. or 8*l.* per man. Claudius and Nero followed this example, increasing the sum to 15,000 H. S.; but this seems to have been confined to the prætorians. From this time the custom was regularly adopted, but the sum given is not generally specified. At a later period Pertinax gave 12,000 H. S. and Julianus 20,000. Marquardt (*Becker's Alterthümer*), iii. 2. p. 439 note.

said, to leave for one day without a legitimate imperator. In suing for a confirmation of the late prince's will, and of the wishes of the legions, he vowed that he would assume no honours, nor suffer them to be decreed him, till he had applied for them in person in acknowledgment of actual services. Hitherto it had been customary for the senate to confer immediately on the new emperor all the functions and titles of supreme power. But at intervals only, and one by one, would Hadrian consent to accept them, and the title of *Pater Patriæ*, the highest distinction of all, he refrained from adopting till a much later period. The chiefs of the civil administration were won over by this show of deference, and became ardent supporters of a throne which was at first manifestly unstable. The zeal of the prætorian prefects whom Hadrian appointed, his former guardian Attianus, and a man of tried and noble character named Similis, sufficed to protect his interests during his absence from the city, and he was enabled to give proof of his clemency at the commencement of his career by remitting the punishment of some pretenders to the empire.¹ Meanwhile Matidia bore the remains of Trajan in a golden urn to Rome, where they were received with peculiar distinction. The senate admitted their friend and patron to the honours of apotheosis without hesitation, and his successor erected a temple to his divinity in the Ulpian forum, and instituted the *Parthian games* in his honour.²

*Apotheosis of
Trajan.*

Hadrian, however, had no intention of retaining his place permanently at the head of his armies. His most anxious care at the outset of his reign was to dispose his officers and legions in the manner most conducive to his own security. He placed Catilius Severus, a man of no conspicuous eminence, in the prefecture of Syria; but at the same time he removed Lusius Quietus from his important command in the East, and sent him to

Hadrian abandons Trajan's conquests in the East.

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 5.: "tantum clementiæ habuit, ut cum sub primis imperii diebus ab Attiano per epistolas esset admonitus . . . neminem læderet."

² Spartian, *Hadr.* 6.; Euseb. *Chron.*

the obscure and distant government of Mauretania. The control of Palestine was entrusted to Martius Turbo. The withdrawal of the Roman forces from the regions occupied by Trajan beyond the ancient frontiers was a measure of actual necessity; and the notion that the abandonment of these recent acquisitions was prompted by a mean jealousy of the conqueror may be discarded as wholly groundless. The conquests of Trajan in the East were plainly unsubstantial. There was no soil beyond the Euphrates in which Roman institutions could take root, while the expense of maintaining them would have been utterly exhausting. But Hadrian was also sensible of the danger to his authority from the ambition of military chiefs placed there in unlimited command of men and money, and removed by the enormous distance from effectual supervision and control. On all these grounds there can be no doubt of his discretion in recurring, at least in this quarter, to the deliberate policy of Augustus, and confining the possessions of the empire within their nat-

He repairs to
Rome, and
celebrates Tra-
jan's triumph.

ural or traditional limits.¹ The execution of these arrangements may have occupied the remainder of the year 117. On their completion Hadrian removed from Antioch, and repaired to Rome. The senate received him with acclamations, and enjoined him to celebrate as his own the victory of Trajan over the Parthians; but this distinction he modestly declined, and the image of the great conqueror was borne in triumph to the temple of Jupiter. So far did he carry his moderation, as to remit to Italy entirely, and in part to the provinces also, the gift of *coronary gold*, usually presented to an emperor on the occasion of his triumph.² Hadrian had come indeed to Rome

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 5. The provinces abandoned by Hadrian were Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. He still retained the district of Petra, to which Trajan had given the name of Arabia.

² A. Gellius, v. 6., explains, as an antiquary, the meaning of the "*aurum coronarium*." At first a crown, i. e., wreaths or chaplets of laurel, were presented. This simple offering was afterwards exchanged for similar crowns in pure gold. Finally the crowns were commuted for a sum of money. The gift

laden with the spoils of war, and the large sums at his disposal enabled him to extend his liberality with well-calculated profusion. Throughout the provinces administered by imperial prefects he remitted the arrears of taxes to the amount of seven millions of our money, and ostentatiously burnt the records of the debt in the Ulpian forum.¹ At the same time he relieved the local officers from the burden of maintaining the imperial posts, and laid the charge of this important department on the fiscus.² To these acts of munificence was added the dotation of noble but impoverished families, and numerous were the well-born Romans, both male and female, who were enabled by this bounty to maintain the dignity of office, or the decent comfort befitting their station. The alimentation of poor children, which we have noticed in preceding reigns, was Alimentation of poor children. extended or increased by fresh endowments. At a later period the authority of Hadrian was cited for the definition of eighteen years in males and fourteen in females, as the age to which this liberality should be extended.³

was originally a thank-offering from the conquered and spared. On the line of Virgil, "Dona recognoscit populorum," Servius remarks that this alludes to the "aurum coronarium." See more on the subject in Becker's *Alterthümer*, iii. 2. 211.

¹ This statement is founded on a comparison of passages in Dion, lxi. 8. : Spartian, *Hadrian*. 7., an inscription in Gruter's *Thesaurus*, and other collections, and a coin described by Spanheim, Eckhel, and others. There are certain difficulties connected with it as regards the time and the circumstances, which are carefully discussed by Gregorovius, *Gesch. Hadriani*, p. 17, foll. The sum remitted is stated in Roman money at "novies millies centena millia N." The arrears were for a period of sixteen years, and the date of the transaction was the second consulship of Hadrian, A. D. 118.

² It must be understood, however, that at this period there was no clear distinction between the Fiscus and the *Ærarium*. The emperor had full command over the treasury of the senatorial provinces, as he had over the appointment of their officers. Dion, liii. 16. 22. ; Hegewisch, *Röm. Finanzen*, p. 183.

³ Spartian, *Hadrian*. 7. : "pueris ac puellis, quibus etiam Trajanus alimenta detulerat, incrementum liberalitatis adiecit." From a notice in the *Digest*, xxxiv. 1. 14., it would seem that this increment was an extension of the age of

Throughout the reign of Hadrian the series of events must be arranged, in a great degree, from conjecture. We may suppose that he was detained for some months at least in the East after the death of Trajan, and that his progress towards Italy, when he at last set out, was retarded by the arrangements which it was requisite to make in the provinces through which he journeyed. If he reached Rome about the beginning of the year 118, his first residence in the city could not have been prolonged beyond a few months, and a career of liberality on which he entered was interrupted by the campaign which he found it necessary to undertake in person in the ensuing spring. The moment of his accession, as we have seen, was clouded with public anxiety. Besides the disturbances in the East, the peace of the empire seems to have been harassed by obscure outbreaks in Mauretania: the Caledonians in the north of Britain were assailing the outposts of the Roman power in that distant island, and in another quarter, equally remote from the Atlas and the Cheviotes, from the Nile and the Euphrates, the wild Sarmatian horsemen were threatening to swim the frontier streams of Dacia and Mæsia. The conquest of Trajan beyond the Danube, fortified, garrisoned and colonized, offered an important bulwark against the rising tides of nomadic barbarism ever beating on the outworks of Roman civilization. Thrust forth into the heart of Europe, between Sarmatians on the east and Sarmatians on the west, the province of Dacia required to be strongly supported and firmly attached to the body of the empire against which it leaned. The genius, indeed, of the Dacians seems to have been peculiarly favourable to this

The dates of this reign uncertain.

Danger on the frontiers of Mauretania, Britain, and Dacia.

the recipients: "ut pueri ad xviii., puellæ ad xiv. annum alantur." It was affirmed by Hadrian's detractors that for all his measures which he feared would be unpopular, he pretended to have express directions from Trajan; among these were the abandonment of the eastern provinces, and the demolition, as it would seem, of the theatre which Trajan had himself commenced in the Campus Martius. *Spartan, Hadrian. 9.*

alliance; for nowhere, as has been said, did the ideas and language of the conquerors strike root more rapidly or fix themselves more permanently. Roman citizens had already poured into the fertile plains of Hungary and Transylvania, and not only a multitude of Roman lives, but masses of Roman wealth and manifold interests, were protected by the constant presence of a large military force. But even Trajan had not disdained the precaution, before adopted by Domitian and Vespasian, of purchasing peace from the barbarians by gifts and subsidies. It had already become a practice on the frontiers to keep some of the neighbouring chiefs in pay, in order to restrain their hostility to Rome, and foster their mutual jealousies. The aggressions of the Roxolani on the Pruth or Dniester were caused, it seems, by a reduction of the tribute which they had hitherto received.¹ Swarms of horsemen crossed the rivers and swept over the plains, and though they could not stand the charge of the Roman soldiery, nor make dispositions for the permanent occupation of Roman territory, they spread terror and confusion among the defenceless inhabitants, and plundered their homesteads with impunity. The alarm reached Rome itself, and Hadrian paused in the midst of his administrative measures to put himself at the head of his forces, and prepare to take the field. Large masses of troops were directed to the Mælian frontier, and Rome saw once more her prince go forth to distant warfare, the toils and perils of which were magnified by distance and obscurity. His back was no sooner turned than jealousies rankling against him broke out in a formidable conspiracy. When Hadrian commenced his career at Rome with such ostentatious generosity, he was anxious to disarm the foes, disguised but not unknown, who clustered around him. Lusius Quietus, Cornelius Palma, Nigrinus and Celsus, the chiefs of the army or the senate, all felt equally mortified by

Aggressions of
the Roxolani.

Hadrian takes
the field
against them.

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 6.: "cum rege Roxolonorum, qui *de imminutis stipendiis* querebatur, cognito negotio pacem composuit."

the elevation to which their former comrade had attained, which they ascribed neither to his merits, nor his connexion with their old master, but to a paltry intrigue. Our record of the affair is indeed confused and inconsistent. One account stated that it was plotted to cut off the emperor in hunting; another that Nigrinus purposed to kill him while

A conspiracy
against him
suppressed.

sacrificing. The assassination was to be effected during his absence from Italy; but it was in Italy that the reported conspirators were seized, at four different spots; they were condemned and put to death by direction of the senate, and Hadrian, who had given the now customary promise never to exact the blood of a senator, could declare that their execution was without his orders, and against his wish.¹ But whatever were the actual circumstances of this event, we may conjecture that Hadrian's return was accelerated by it. Instead of plunging at the head of his troops into a career of fresh conquests, as his subjects may have anticipated, he refrained even from chastising the insults of the enemy, and was satisfied with repeating and perhaps increasing the bribes of his

The Roxolani
induced to re-
tire.

predecessors.² The Roxolani were induced to retire once more within their own lines, only to break out again at the next favourable opportunity. But Hadrian secured the tranquillity of Dacia, at least for a season, by placing in command there his trustiest officer, Martius Turbo, with extraordinary powers. The province continued to be held as an integral portion of the empire through many reigns, and we are at a loss to account for the

Hadrian's al-
leged intention
of abandoning
Dacia.

common statement of the historians, that Hadrian contemplated its abandonment, not so much from the difficulty of keeping it, as from a petty

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 7. This conspiracy may be dated A. D. 119, in Hadrian's third consulship. Euseb, *Chron.*

² Spartian, &c. *Hadr.* 6. The Roxolani lay to the east of Dacia; the Sarmatians are mentioned both to the east and to the west. The Iazyges (on the Theiss), who wanted to trade with the Roxolani, sought a passage through Dacia. Dion, lxxi. 19. It is said of the emperor Aurelius: ἐφῆκεν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τοὺς Ῥοξολάνους διὰ τῆς Δακίας ἐπιμύνησθαι.

jealousy of Trajan.¹ Dion, indeed, declares circumstantially that he destroyed the bridge over the Danube, to prevent the barbarians from crossing into Mæsia; and Dion had undoubtedly the means of ascertaining the truth, if he cared to employ them. But my acquaintance with this historian does not lead me to balance his word in such a case against the great improbability which lies on the face of the story.²

Hadrian returned to Rome, pleased at least with the clear sweep which had been made of all his rivals, and well satisfied with the zeal the senate had shown in his behalf; yet not without apprehension of the Hadrian courts the senate, grudge that might be felt against him for the shedding of so much noble blood. The removal of Attianus and Similis from the prætorian prefecture may have been meant to mark his pretended displeasure at this sacrifice. Both of them were trusty and able servants. The simple honesty of Similis was deemed worthy of special remembrance by the historians. Doubtless the sudden disgrace of men so highly recommended helped to stamp on Hadrian a character for ingratitude and envy.³ He repeated the assurance he had already given, that henceforth the life of a senator should be ever sacred in his eyes. The tokens of deference he showed to the order, the marked favour he bestowed on its most distinguished members, and the various popular decrees he issued, may probably be traced to this period, and to the anxiety he felt at this moment to conciliate the nobles of the city. *The emperor, we read, deigned to admit the best of the*

¹ Eutrop. viii. 6 : "qui Trajani gloriæ invidens statim provincias tres reliquit quas Trajanus addiderat (see above); . . . idem de Dacia facere conatum amici deterruerunt."

² Dion, lxviii. 13. : ἀφείλε τὴν ἐπιπολῆς κατασκευήν. But this is not confirmed by Eutropius, from whom we may infer that Hadrian was deterred from abandoning the province by the claims of the Roman settlers on his protection; viii. 6. An inscription, said to have been discovered at Varhély, goes so far as to ascribe the conquest of the province to Hadrian. "Imp. . . . Hadriano . . . ejus virtute Dacia imperio addita felix est." Gruter, 249.; Gregorovius, p. 22. Eckhel seems to doubt its genuineness, vi. 494.

³ Spartian, *Hadrian*. 9. Dion, lxix. 19.

senators freely to his private society. He repudiated the games of the circus voted in his honour, excepting those on his own birthday only, and often declared in the Curia that he would so govern the commonwealth that it should know that it belonged to the people, and not to himself. As he made himself consul thrice, so he advanced several personages to a third consulship; but the number to whom he granted a second was very considerable. His own third consulship he held for four months only, and in that time sat often in judgment. He always attended the regular meetings of the senate whether within or without the city. He cherished highly the dignity of the order, making new members with difficulty; so much so, that when he thus advanced Attianus, who was already prefect of the prætorians, and enjoyed the triumphal ornaments, he showed that there was no higher eminence to which he could exalt him. He suffered not the knights to try the causes of senators, unless he were himself present; no, nor even then. For it had been the custom for the prince to take counsel with both senators and knights in such cases, and to deliver judgment after deliberating with them all in common. Finally, Hadrian expressed his detestation of princes who paid the senate less deference than he showed himself. To Servianus, his sister's husband, whom he treated with such reverence as always to meet him when he issued from his chamber in the morning, he gave a third consulship, unasked, taking care that it should not coincide with his own, that Servianus might never be required to speak second in debate.¹ This respect for the security and dignity of the Roman magnates was confirmed, as far as laws could confirm it, by a decree that the estates of criminals should no longer accrue to the imperial fiscus, but to the public treasury. Hadrian thus wisely put himself beyond the reach of temptation, beyond the suspicion of interest. The affluence he inherited from his father's conquests he maintained by his own discreet econo-

and the popu-
lace.

¹ Spartian, *Hadrian*. 8.

my; for his expenditure, though ample and liberal as became him, seems to have been extravagant in no particular; even his buildings, however splendid and costly, were less various and less numerous than those of Trajan. On great occasions the shows with which he favoured the populace were conceived on a scale of unbounded magnificence. It is remarked that he exhibited combats of gladiators for six days in succession, and gave a birthday massacre of a thousand wild beasts; but such banquets of blood and treasure were apparently not repeated, and on the whole the attitude he assumed towards the people at their amusements was stern and reserved, rather than criminally indulgent.¹

Such were the arts, easy to princes, by which Hadrian laid the basis of his power in the regard of the soldiers, the nobles, and the great body of the people. Succeed-
Hadrian's popular manners.
 ing to the most beloved of rulers, with an obedient army, a contented nobility, and a well-stored treasury, his position was doubtless more than usually favourable. Nevertheless the temper and abilities he brought to the task were also admirably fitted for it. We may remark how little the consolidation of the monarchy had yet tended to separate the master from his subjects, and fix barriers of etiquette between them. The intercourse of Trajan with his friend Pliny, though disfigured by the extravagant forms of salutation adopted by the inferior, was substantially that of two companions in arts and arms in the time of the republic; it was less distant perhaps than that which had obtained between the proconsul in his province and the favoured subaltern of his cohort. But Hadrian was distinguished, even beyond his predecessor, by the
He betrays occasional jealousy and envy.
 geniality of his temperament. Versed in all the knowledge of his era, he placed himself on an intimate footing with the ablest teachers and practitioners, and divided

¹ Spartian, in *Hadrian*. 7, 8. The birthday here specified was probably that which fell in the year 119, after Hadrian's return from *Mæsia*. The anniversary was the 4th of January, when he had just accepted his third consulship.

his smiles equally between senators like Fronto, and freedmen such as Favorinus the rhetorician, and the architect Apollodorus. He condescended, indeed, to enter into competition with the professors of eloquence and the fine arts; but here, though he did not require, like Nero, that his rivals should yield him the palm, he could not always control the irritability of his genius. It was well for those who could allow themselves to be worsted, and disguise at the same time the tameness of their surrender, as in the case of Favorinus, who, according to the well-known story, yielded a strong position to his imperial antagonist, and replied to the inquiry of a surprised bystander, *why he defended himself so feebly, that it is ill arguing with the master of thirty legions.*¹ Other opponents, however, were less obliging. Hadrian, it is said, continued after his accession to retain a grudge against Apollodorus for having derided his early efforts in painting. He was bent on proving himself a greater architect than the master of the art. When about to construct his magnificent temple of Rome and Venus, he produced a design of his own, and showed it with proud satisfaction to Apollodorus. The creator of the Trajan column remarked with a sneer that the deities, if they rose from their seats, must thrust their heads through the ceiling. The emperor, we are assured, could not forgive this banter, which was at least unbecoming; but we need hardly take to the letter the statement that he put his critic to death for it.² Towards the close of his career, indeed, Hadrian became, as we shall see, captious and jealous of those around him; but such cold-blooded barbarity is little in accordance with his usual temper. To his many ac-

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 15. This phlegmatic philosopher used to pique himself on three paradoxes of fortune: *Γαλάνης ὡν Ἑλληνίζεν, εἰνοῦχος ὡν μοιχείας κρίνεσθαι, βασιλεῖ διαφέρεσθαι καὶ ζῆν.* Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 8. For other anecdotes of the same kind about Hadrian see this writer also, *Vit. Sophist.* i. 22.

² Dion, *lxi.* 4.: *καὶ οὐτε τὴν ὀργὴν οὐτε τὴν λύπην κάτεσχευ, ἀλλ' ἐφόνευσεν αὐτόν.* The reader who has attended to the character of this writer's statements throughout this history will be always ready to allow for his malignant credulity.

complishments he added, on the whole, an affability rarely seen in the Roman princes, such as may remind us of the best days of the republic, when the demeanour of the noble toward his client was marked with peculiar courtesy and forbearance, secured by the general sobriety of his manners and the refined dignity of his breeding.

Hadrian's third consulship commenced with the year 119, and he retained it for four months, in which interval he returned from his Sarmatian expedition, amused and flattered the senators in the city, and prepared for more extended movements. From this period the only history of this emperor, and of his times, is the record, confused and imperfect both in dates and circumstances, of his journeys through every province of his empire, broken only by occasional sojourns at his provincial capitals, till he finally settled for his last few years at Rome. It was his object, partly from policy, but more perhaps from the restless curiosity of his disposition, to inspect every corner of his dominions, to examine in person its state and resources, to make himself acquainted with its wants and capabilities, and with the administrative processes applied to it. Curious also about the character of men, he studied on the spot the temper, the abilities, the views and feelings of the multitude of officials with whom he had ordinarily to correspond at a distance, upon whom he had to impress his own views of government, to whom he had to declare his pleasure by the rescripts which became thenceforth the laws of the empire. There is something sublime in the magnitude of the task he thus imposed on himself; nor are the zeal and constancy with which he pursued it less extraordinary. If other chiefs of wide-spread empires have begun with the same bold and generous conception of their duty, it may be doubted whether any have so persevered through a period of twenty years.

Hadrian undertakes to make himself personally acquainted with all the provinces.

It may be observed, moreover, that there was something in the carriage required of a Roman Emperor little consist-

His assiduity in performing the duties of a military chief, and in maintaining discipline.

ent with such active and prying curiosity. The dignity of his military character was hedged round by formalities and decorums, on which the haste and excitement of the traveller and sight-seer would rudely infringe. Yet among the merits which the historians recognise in Hadrian, was one which they could have learnt only from his officers and soldiers, his assiduity in performing the duties of a commander. Hadrian, it was allowed, maintained in its full vigour the discipline of Trajan. He was constantly seen, throughout his progresses, at the head of his legions, sometimes on horseback, but more commonly on foot, marching steadily with them twenty miles a day, and always bare-headed; for if the Roman soldier was permitted to relieve himself on march of the weight of his helmet, he might not replace it with the effeminate covering of a cap or bonnet. He inspected day by day the camps and lines of his garrisons, examined their arms and machines of war, their tents, huts, and hospitals, as well as their clothes and rations, tasting himself their black bread, their lard and cheese, their sour wine or vinegar. These attentions ingratiated him with the soldiers, and made them tolerant of his severe demands on their patience and activity. He constantly passed his troops in review, and encouraged them by his own example to submit to the ever-recurring drill which was necessary to maintain their efficiency. He restored or enforced the regulations of the tacticians, and, while he sedulously avoided war on the frontiers, kept all his legions in a state of preparedness for war. With this view he strictly repressed the indulgences both of men and officers, in respect to dwellings, furniture, and equipments, and cut off the luxurious appliances with which they sought to relieve the hardships or tedium of their protracted exile. An important testimony to the value of his exertions is borne by the historian Dion, who, writing at least eighty years later, says that the rules established by Hadrian remained in force down to his own days.¹

¹ Dion, lxi. 9. Comp. Spartian, in *Hadrian*. 10. Vegetius, a writer of

Even before his elevation to power, Hadrian's active career had led him into most of the provinces. The regions of the North-west were among those with which he was least acquainted, and in these his presence was more especially required to maintain the authority of the conquerors. On quitting Rome he directed his course through Gaul, and reached the Germanic provinces on the Rhine, where he showed himself to the barbarians from the ramparts of Moguntiacum or Colonia. *He set a king over the Germans*, says Spartianus, with excessive and indeed culpable brevity; but the oracle admits neither of expansion nor explanation.¹ We are wholly ignorant of the attitude assumed by the German tribes towards Rome at this moment, and of their relations to one another. We can only suppose that the chief whom Hadrian established on his throne was pledged, and possibly subsidized, to restrain the nations that bordered on the rampart of Trajan; and we may believe that, not trusting entirely to this safeguard, the emperor prolonged or strengthened that great barrier. His care, indeed, extended to the whole line of the German frontier. The foundation of a colony at Juvavium, or Salzburg, which received the name of Forum Hadriani, attests the vigilance which directed his view from the Rhine to the Salza, and the taste, I would willingly add, which selected for a town to bear his name, the most enchanting site in central Europe.

Hadrian's progress into Gaul and Germany.

From Gaul Hadrian passed over into Britain. Of the movements in that province which required his presence we have no account; but since Trajan's death an outbreak of some importance had occurred; for in the cursory allusion to it which alone remains

Progress into Britain,
A. D. 119,

the fourth century, says (i. 27.): "præterea et vetus consuetudo permansit, et D. Augusti atque Hadriani constitutionibus præcavetur, ut ter in mense tam equites quam pedites educantur ambulatum." This tension of discipline seems to be commemorated on the coins of Hadrian which bear the legend *disciplin. Aug.* Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 503. Victor remarks more generally: "officia publica et palatina, nec non militiæ, in eam formam statuit quæ paucis per Constantinum immutatis hodie perseverant." *Epit.* 28.

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 12.: "Germanis regem constituit."

the losses of Rome from the Britons are placed in the same line with those she suffered from the Jews.¹ The conquest of the southern portion of the island had been effected, as we have seen, with rapidity, though not unchequered by reverses. Commenced by Plautius and Ostorius, confirmed by Suetonius, and consolidated by Agricola, it had been accepted from henceforth without an audible murmur by the natives, who indemnified themselves for their evil fortune, if evil it was, by cultivating the arts of their conquerors, and declining to renew an unavailing struggle. The rapid advance of Roman civilization astonished the Romans themselves. They pictured the furthest Orkneys prostrate before them, and Shetland inviting a southern sophist to instruct her in polished letters.² In no part of their dominions, however, had the happy results of peace and security shown themselves in fairer colours. The building of cities, the cultivation of the land, the construction of roads, the erection of neat or voluptuous pleasure-houses, had converted the lair of Cæsar's painted savages into an Italian garden. Already the warm and mineral springs had been discovered, which still draw our health-seekers to Bath and Clifton, to Cheltenham and Matlock; the tin, copper, and silver ores of Devon had been worked with method and perseverance; the iron of Gloucestershire and Sussex, the lead of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Salop, the coal of Wales, Staffordshire and Durham, had all been brought into requisition, to supply the most essential wants of a thriving population, and to pour their surplus into the imperial

Flourishing
state of the
province.

¹ Fronto, *fragm. de bell. Parth.* 322.: "quid, avo vestro Hadriano imperium obtinente, quantum militum a Judæis, quantum a Britannis cæsum!"

² Juvenal, ii. *in fin.*: "arma quidem ultra Litora Juvæ promovimus et modo captas Orcadas;" xv. 112.: "De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule." Martial, vii. 10.: "Dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus." Tacitus, a graver authority, speaks not less pointedly (*Agric.* 21.): "jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent."

treasury.¹ Britain had her own potteries and glass-houses; she grew large quantities of grain adapted to her climate, and exported corn and cattle, as well as handsome slaves, to the markets of the continent. No Roman province was more self-supporting, or more capable, as she proved, at least for a moment, at a later period, of asserting her independence. All this material progress had been made with little direct instruction or aid from her conquerors; for Britain contained, as far as we know, but one, or at most three colonies of Roman citizens;² her invaders were still encamped on her soil as soldiers in arms, and had not yet laid down their swords to assume the implements of peace. Meanwhile the greatest sphere of British energy and activity seems to have lain in the northern rather than in the southern parts of England. Cornwall and Devonshire, and even Kent and Sussex, were left in great measure under the dominion of the primeval forest, while Eboracum or York seems to have been the chief city of the province, and the resources of the country round it to have been most thoroughly explored and utilized. A

¹ Ptolemy, writing in the age of Hadrian, gives a list of fifty towns in Southern Britain. Coins of the early emperors from Claudius downwards have been found in various localities. Inscriptions on pigs of lead, &c., refer to the reigns of Claudius, Vespasian and Domitian. The account of our island in the text is taken from my general reading on the subject, and I think it will be fully borne out by Mr. Wright's excellent "Handbook of Britain," to which he gives the title of "The Kelt, the Roman, and the Saxon." The greatest stores of original information on the subject of Roman-British archaeology may be found in the *Collectanea Antiqua* of Mr. Roach Smith, and in Dr. Bruce's interesting work on the Roman Wall.

² The only colony in the proper sense of which we can speak with certainty is that of Claudius at Camulodunum (Colchester). Isea Silurum (Caerleon), and Deva (Chester), are also enumerated by the antiquaries as permanent military stations, and possibly are found so entitled on inscriptions. There is said to be the authority of an inscribed stone for Glevum (Gloucester) also; and Lincoln is sometimes added to the list from the name only. The pretender Richard of Cirencester adds Londinium (London), Rutupiae (Richborough), Aquæ Solis (Bath), and Camboricum (Cambridge). This statement is of no authority. Londinium and Verulamium were municipia in the time of Tacitus, and so probably was Eboracum.

stimulus, no doubt, was given in this quarter to productions of all kinds by the presence of the local government, and of the legions which maintained it. Eboracum was the seat of the prefect with his official staff, and the ministers of his luxury, while Londinium was still a mere resort of traders.¹ The northern limit of the province was as yet imperfectly defined. Agricola's chain of forts between the Clyde and Forth was held by the most advanced battalions; but while many Roman settlers had planted themselves beyond the Cheviots, and even beyond the Forth, the camps he had previously traced between the Tyne and Solway formed a stronger bulwark; and this lower line of fortifications commanded more respect than the upper from the roaming tribes of Caledonia, ever on the watch to harry the homesteads of the intruders. The line of the Tyne formed practically the limit of Roman civilization, and the settlers who dwelt within range of the barbarians, constantly subject to attacks, and ever appealing to the prefect for protection, had recently suffered, as I imagine, from an assault of more than ordinary ferocity, and had engaged the presidiary cohorts in a bootless and calamitous campaign. The time was come when it was necessary to specify more accurately the limits within which the protection of Rome could be fairly required and substantially afforded.

Limit of Roman civilization in the North.

In the absence of historical statements we can only con-

¹ Among the innumerable remains of Roman villas discovered in this island, there is none, I believe, that has revealed by a fragment of inscription the name and quality of its owner. We do not know whether the Roman civilian of fortune was in the habit of making his residence in the country districts. Our Roman villas seem to have been generally placed in the vicinity of military stations, and may have been the pleasure-houses of the officers. The designs of their mosaics, as far as they have been discovered, are said to be limited to two subjects, that of Neptune and the marine divinities, and that of Orpheus; the one being an allusion to our insular position, the other to the progress of civilization among us. The subject of Orpheus is specially appropriated to eating-rooms. The Roman banquet, with its music, its recitations, and the bath which preceded it, was a type of the highest advance in social cultivation:

"Credibus et victu fœdo deterruit Orpheus." *Hor. Ars. Poet.* 392.

jecture that Hadrian took his survey of the state of the British province from Eboracum, and that he crossed the Tyne in person at the spot where the Ælian bridge was constructed, which gave its name to the military post by which he secured it.¹ Of his further progress northward there is no trace perhaps remaining; but it is not improbable that he extended his personal exploration to the Frith of Forth, before he finally determined to place the bulwark of the empire on the lower isthmus. The neck of land which separates the Solway from the German Ocean is about sixty miles in width, and is singularly well adapted for the site of a defensive barrier. The Tyne and Irthing flowing in opposite directions, east and west, through deep valleys, present in themselves no trifling obstacles to a barbarian foe, and the tract of land which separates and screens their sources is lofty and precipitous towards the north. The base of this mountain ridge was then lost also for the most part in swamps, and wherever the cliff was broken by rugged defiles, access to them was obstructed by dense forests. This advantageous position had been seized by Agricola, and though his enemies impelled him further northward, he did not neglect to secure it as a base of operations, by the construction of numerous forts, or entrenched camps, which he placed generally on the southern slope of his mountain ramparts. These posts were connected by a military way, and in them the reserves of the presidial force were permanently collected, while a few cohorts were advanced to the extreme boundary of the province on the upper isthmus of Clyde and Forth. Hadrian determined to follow out on this spot the same discreet and moderate policy he had established elsewhere. Without formally withdrawing his outposts, or denuding of all protection the provincials, who had settled under their wing, he drew from the Tyne to the Solway the ostensible frontier of his dominions.

Fortification of the upper isthmus between Tyne and Solway.

¹ Pons Ælii of the "Notitia Imperii" is amply identified with Newcastle-on-Tyne by inscriptions.

He connected the camps of Agricola with a fosse and palisaded rampart of earth, adding subsidiary entrenchments, so as to strengthen the work with a fortified station at every fourth or fifth mile.¹ The execution of this stupendous undertaking may have occupied the troops and their native assistants for several years; but the chiefs of the empire regarded it as so important for the security of the province, that they continued from time to time to supply additional

defences. Severus, two generations later, may be supposed to have thrown up the second line of earthworks, which runs parallel to those of Hadrian, and is evidently formed to support them; and finally the stupendous wall of solid masonry, of which some fragmentary sections still remain, running as an exterior bulwark a few yards to the northward from end to end, may be ascribed, as I venture to think, most probably, neither to Hadrian nor Severus, but to the age of Theodosius and Stilicho.² Meanwhile the camps which Agricola had planted on the bleak rocks and moors of Northumbria, budded, in the course of ages, into little towns, fenced with stone walls, adorned with halls and temples, and on their monuments were engraved the names of prefects and centurions, as well as of all the gods and goddesses of the cosmopolitan Olympus of the second and third centuries. We know from written records that the troops by which these strongholds were occupied represented from twenty to thirty distinct nations. Along this line of mutual communication Gauls

Works of Hadrian, of Severus, and of the age of Theodosius.

¹ Spartian, *Had.* 11.: "murum per octoginta millia passuum primus duxit, qui barbaros Romanosque divideret." By "murum" I understand the earthen rampart which still exists, and may be traced over a great part of this line. Comp. the same author's account in c. 12. of the usual character of Hadrian's presidial works: "per ea tempora et alias frequenter in plurimis locis in quibus barbari non fluminibus sed limitibus dividuntur, stipitibus magnis in modum muralis sepiis funditus jactis atque connexis, barbaros separavit."

² This is not the place to enter into the reasoning with which I have suggested this solution in the *Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1860. The texts of Dion and the Augustan History, which are cited to prove the stone wall to be the work of Hadrian or Severus, may very well refer to the earthen ramparts only.

and Germans, Thracians and Iberians, Moors and Syrians, held the frontiers of the Roman empire against the Caledonian Britons. Here some thirty languages resounded from as many camps; but the sonorous speech of Latium, not much degraded from the tone still preserved on its native soil, ever maintained its supremacy as the language of command and of every official and public document. On this narrow strip of land we may read an epitome of the history of the Romans under the Empire: for myself, I feel that all I have read and written on this wide and varied subject, is condensed, as it were, in the picture I realize, from a few stones and earthworks, of their occupation of our northern marches.¹

By this formidable barrier the incursions of the Caledonians were effectually restrained, and the support of the large force which held it encouraged the Roman settlers to plant themselves on every eligible spot throughout the lowlands even beyond it. Though the region which stretches between the two isthmuses was not yet incorporated in the Roman dominions, or reduced to the form of a province, the immigrants from the south felt sufficiently secure in the protection of Hadrian's lines below, and Agricola's forts above them. Four legions continued to occupy the possessions of the empire in the island, and the equanimity with which the southern Britons bore the yoke might allow a large portion of their force to encamp in front of the barbarians on the Tyne and Clyde. The duration of Hadrian's residence hardly admits of conjecture; it would seem, however, from a very enigmatical statement of Spartianus, that he brought over the empress to Britain, and probably established his court there for the win-

Hadrian in
Britain.
A. D. 119, 120.
A. U. 872, 873.

¹ Though I hesitate to accept Dr. Bruce's conclusions as to the origin and author of the Wall, I feel not the less how deeply the students of history are indebted to the ability with which he has investigated the remains connected with this subject, and produced in his instructive monograph a vivid picture of the Roman domination in Britain, which is in fact a type of that domination throughout the provinces.

ter of 119–120. The terms on which he lived with Sabina were never cordial; he scarcely refrained, it is said, from putting her to death, and declared at least that, had he been in a private station, he would have divorced her; and she reciprocated this dislike, if not with acts of infidelity, with expressions of bitter hatred. Nevertheless, she seems to have been the companion of his journeys, not in Britain only, but elsewhere; and it was during her sojourn here with him that he disgraced his prefect Septicius Clarus, and his secretary Suetonius Tranquillus, for showing her disrespect.¹ That she had, indeed, much cause to complain of his vicious indulgences, must be freely admitted. His detractors asserted that in the gratification of his passions he disregarded the ties of friendship also; while his jealousy or curiosity led him to violate the common rules of honour, in prying into private correspondence.²

From Britain the emperor directed his progress to the South-west. In the course of a second journey through Gaul, he commanded, among other acts of munificence and splendour, the erection of a basilica at Nemausus, in honour of his benefactress, Plotina, who seems to have died at this period.³ The next step in his pilgrimage brought him into Spain, which he

Hadrian visits
Spain,
A. D. 120.

¹ Septicius had succeeded to Attianus as prefect of the prætorians; but during the emperor's travels his place was not at the palace, but at the prætorium, whether in the camp or elsewhere. Suetonius is the same to whose valuable biography of the first twelve Cæsars we are so much indebted. As the disgraced minister of Hadrian we can easily imagine that he gave currency to the worst stories against him. The account, however, of Spartian is, as I have said in the text, very enigmatical: "*qui apud Sabinam uxorem, injussu ejus, familiarius se tunc egerant quam reverentia domus aulicæ postulabat.*"

² Spartian, *Had.* l. c.

³ Of this basilica there are no remains. The famous temple or *Maison carrée* is of a later date. We do not know of any connexion between Plotina and the town of Nemausus. Possibly she may have attended Hadrian in some part of his journeys, and have died there. But Nemausus was the native place of the family of Antoninus, whom Hadrian afterwards adopted, and whom he had advanced in this year (120) to the consulship.

probably reached by sea, effecting his landing at Tarraco, where he passed the ensuing winter.¹ Here he convened an assembly of the Iberian states, not to deliberate, but to receive from his own mouth the imperial decrees regarding military enlistment. The provincials, it seems, but more particularly the colonists from Rome and Italy, had ventured to resist the usual levy of men for service; but the emperor's measures, urged with caution and judgment, overcame their opposition. An instance of Hadrian's good sense and temper is here cited. While walking one day in the garden of his host's abode, a slave suddenly ran upon him with a drawn sword. The man was seized, and was found on examination to be insane. The emperor, who had shown the utmost presence of mind, insisted that he should not be punished, and handed him over to the physicians. At Tarraco he restored the temple of Augustus; but his services to the province were no doubt more important and extensive, and we find upon his medals, struck in this country, the legend which indeed accompanies him throughout his imperial progresses, the *Restorer of Spain*. Though he did not care to visit his own birthplace on the banks of the Bætis, he enriched it with presents and endowments.

Mauretania had never yet been honoured with the presence of a Roman emperor. Hadrian crossed the Mediterranean, and occupied himself in person with tranquillizing disturbances which had broken out in that remote dependency, connected perhaps with the treasonable intrigues of Lusius. The movement, whatever its origin or nature, was deemed by the senate of sufficient importance to be signalized by a Supplication.²

He visits Mauretania.

A much longer stride bore him next to the opposite extremity of the empire; and it is with some surprise and per-

¹ This, as I imagine, was the winter of 120-121; but neither Clinton nor Gregorovius ventures to determine the date.

² Spartian, *Hadrian*. 12.: "motus Maurorum compressit et a senatu supplicationes emeruit." The title of *Restorer of Mauretania*, which appears on his coins, may refer to the revived security of the Roman colonists.

Hadrian on the
frontiers of
Parthia,
whence he re-
pairs to Athens,
A. D. 122, 123.

plexity that we hear of his suddenly appearing on the borders of Parthia. The policy of Chosroes, it seems, was dubious, and the state of the eastern provinces was at this moment precarious.

An effort was required to confirm the rival monarch in his alliance, and Hadrian, averse even to a mere demonstration of force, sought to secure his influence in a personal interview.¹ The result seems to have fully justified the judgment which dictated this proceeding. The Parthian desisted from any attempt to embroil the dominions of the Roman potentate, and the two empires continued throughout the reign of Hadrian on terms of peace and mutual forbearance. From Syria the emperor returned homeward through the province of Asia Minor, and touched at some islands in the Ægean, on his route to Athens. At the Grecian capital he made a more lengthened sojourn, commencing new edifices for its decoration, and presiding at its festivals.² But Rome was

Returns to
Rome, and
visits Sicily
and Carthage,
A. D. 123.

still the goal of his long and circuitous progress, and hither he once more bent his steps, with but one short digression to visit Sicily, and witness a sunrise from the summit of Etna. From Rome,

however, he crossed the sea to Carthage, and conferred many benefits on the province of Africa. The people there bestowed on him the usual compliments in return, and ascribed to his auspicious advent the copious fall of rain, which at last, after a five years' interval, bedewed their arid country.³ From Africa he retraced his voyage to Rome.

None perhaps of our princes, says Spartian at this juncture, ever traversed so rapidly so large a portion of the world.

Hadrian's sec-
ond progress,
A. D. 125-134.

Hadrian seems to have generally alternated a period of residence in winter with another, perhaps a longer period, of locomotion in the sum-

¹ Spartian, in *Hadrian*. 12. : "bellum Parthicum per idem tempus in motu tantum fuit ; idque Hadriani colloquio repressum est."

² At Athens Hadrian may have passed the winter of 122-123. Clinton, from Euseb. *Chronicon*.

³ Spartian, *Hadrian*. 13. 22. : "post quinquennium pluit ; atque ideo ab Africanis dilectus est."

mer. The visit to Africa may fill the interval between two winters passed in Rome. The chronologists at least assure us that he was at Athens in the year 125, on his way, as we are informed by Spartian, to the East.¹ This was the commencement of what is generally designated as Hadrian's Second Progress, which embraced the greater part of his subsequent reign, and included more than one long residence at Athens, with sojourns of some duration at Antioch and Alexandria. It was not till the year 134 that he returned finally to Rome, and it seems impossible to reduce to consecutive order our meagre notices of these various peregrinations. The most interesting incidents in this career refer to his abode at Athens and Alexandria. We have sufficient authority to fix his residence in the Egyptian capital to the year 131, and I imagine that, down to the year preceding, he was for the most part domiciled in his favourite Athens. The events of the Jewish wars carried him probably to Syria in 132, and from thence, as we may infer, he conducted his second negotiations with Parthia, and there invited the attendance of the chiefs of the Armenian border-land. He was unquestionably at Athens once more at the end of 133, and there passed one winter, and his final return to Italy, which he seems never again to have quitted, may thus be assigned, as before said, to the year 134. But the political events of this period are either insignificant, or have been already anticipated; and we may take this opportunity to cast an eye on the moral and social spectacles presented by the great cities of Athens and Alexandria, the rival universities of the Roman world.

His residence
at Alexandria
and Athens.

However numerous and magnificent were the buildings

¹ Clinton from Eusebius. Spartian, *Hadrian*, 13. I suppose the winters 123-124, 124-125 to have been passed at Rome: the second being subsequent to the return from Africa. I must allow, however, that Spartian says: "cum post Africam Romam redisset *statim* ad Orientem profectus per Athenas iter fecit." The word "*statim*" may indeed mean, "as soon as ever the next season for travelling arrived." But the chronology of Eusebius would allow of Hadrian passing this winter, 124-125, at Athens.

of Trajan, he must yield the palm, with every other imperial builder, to Hadrian, who possessed the taste, and had acquired even the technical knowledge of an architect, and enjoyed, as no architect before or since, the means and opportunity of executing his own favourite conceptions. In Greece, as elsewhere, the works by which this prince obtained the title of Restorer, were not confined to political and social improvements, but referred more commonly to the creation of solid and material monuments, to the erection of aqueducts and baths, temples and libraries, and the disposition of streets, squares, and public places. The ancient city of Pericles had suffered for ages a gradual decline in wealth and population. The sack under Sulla was a blow from which a community in decay, sustained by no provincial dependencies, could with difficulty recover; and it was only the peculiar advantage it possessed, as the home of arts and learning, and the object of special solicitude and veneration to liberal minds, that enabled the seat of the Muses to retain its place at the head of Academic institutions. But the halls and temples which had adorned the free state with the purest models of architectural embellishment still towered above the city and the plain in their graceful forms and noble proportions; though repeatedly despoiled of more portable works of art, not the temples and halls only, but the streets and forums still glistened with exquisite figures in brass or marble; the shapely block of the Theseium was rooted in the soil of which it seems even now a natural product, and the figure of protecting Pallas still stood, where it stands no longer, on the steadfast throne of the Acropolis.¹ In better times, besides its public buildings,

Works of Hadrian for the embellishment of Athens.

¹ The account of Pausanias, a few years later, shows how Athens then abounded in ancient temples and works of art. Whatever may have been the spoiliations of the old Roman proconsuls, and at a later period of Nero, we may observe that this writer specifies many works of Phidias, Praxiteles, and other illustrious artists, as still visible at Athens. Most of these, however, were of marble, only one or two of gold or silver. The cupidity of the conquerors had been tempted by the precious material rather than the precious workmanship.

Athens was noted for the splendour of many private dwellings: the well-known features of the Roman mansion, with its sumptuous array of central court and surrounding dwelling-rooms, were modelled, with allowance for the difference of eastern and western manners, on the type of the Grecian and Athenian. The Eupatridæ of Athens, indeed, had never rivalled the Roman patricians in the splendour of their lodging, as they had never equalled them in wealth, and the number of the rich among the inhabitants of the Grecian city was doubtless much smaller than at Rome. The poorer classes at Athens were not the clients of the wealthy, and their humble tenements were not, I suppose, clustered around the walls of the noble mansion, but stood each apart in all their poverty and nakedness. Nor was the meanness of each separate cabin carried off, as at Rome, by the aggregation of house upon house, for they were generally of a single floor, and it was only in their material,—for no material at Athens was readier than stone or even marble,—that they excelled the most squalid den of the Roman proletariat. The Greeks were, moreover, a far less cleanly people than the Romans, and as they paid little regard to their personal ablutions, they held, it may be presumed, in still less honour the neatness of their dwellings and their streets.¹ We must picture Athens to ourselves, at this period, as a dirty city in decay: we must imagine the combination of a site of unrivalled magnificence, of mingled slope and level, formed by nature for enhancing to the utmost the graces and harmonies of constructive art, with a throng of mouldering fanes and neglected mansions, which alternated, along its straggling

¹ See Dr. Smith's excellent article on "Athens" in the *Dict. of Class. Geography*, with his references to Aristophanes, Dicæarchus, and especially to Strabo, v. p. 235. Rain-water was probably collected in tanks, and the limestone rock on which Athens is situated, was apparently perforated with channels which brought supplies from more distant reservoirs and fountains. The dust of the modern city is described as intolerable. Hadrian constructed the only aqueduct. There were three or four springs in the city, but one only, that of Callirrhoe, was drinkable, and this for a population computed by Büsch, under the free state, at 180,000! *Publ. Econ. of Athens*, i. 56.

avenues, with low and squalid cabins, scarcely raised above the filth and rottenness accumulated around them; on which every rent and stain of time was rendered painfully conspicuous by a sun of unclouded splendour, except when obscured by whirlwinds of dust generated on the bare limestone rock, treeless, grassless, and waterless.¹ Hadrian may have done for Athens what Nero did for Rome, in reconstructing large portions of the city in the open and luxurious style of Antioch and Ephesus. One quarter, which he either wholly rebuilt, or so beautified that it might pass for his own building, received, at least in popular language, the designation of Hadrianopolis; and on the gate which led into it from the ancient city were inscriptions purporting to distinguish the town of Theseus from the town of Hadrian.² He may have repaired and cleansed the public buildings; but the barbaric intermixture of splendour and squalor which characterizes a declining community, could hardly be effaced by the most liberal encouragement to monumental magnificence. Temples of Zeus and Here rose at his command in connexion with the names of the emperor and the empress, and another fane, inscribed to *All the Gods*, may have been designed to emulate the Roman Pantheon.³

¹ It is fortunate, perhaps, that nothing is told us of the drainage of Athens; no great city was ever so badly placed for due abstersion by natural outfall. The brook Ilissus was a mere open sewer which stagnated in a marsh. No wonder that the poets avoid all allusion to it. Statius, only, says of it most heedlessly: "*Ilissus multa purgavit lumina lympha.*" *Theb.* viii. extr. Even Socrates took his friend to its banks above the city. Plato, *Phædr.* init.

² The arch is still existing, and is reputed to have great architectural merit. The inscriptions are: αἱ δ' εἰς 'Αδριανοῦ κοῦχ' Ἐθσεῶς πόλις, on the one side: αἱ δ' εἰς 'Αθῆναι Ἐθσεῶς ἢ πρὶν πόλις on the other. Gruter, *Inscript.* p. 1078.
1. Gregorovius, *Gesch. Hadr.* p. 205.

³ Pausan. *Attic.* 18. 9. 'Αδριανὸς δὲ κατεσκευάσατο μὲν καὶ ἄλλα 'Αθηναί-
οις, ναὸν Ἡρας, καὶ Διὸς Πανελληνίου, καὶ θεοῖς τοῖς πᾶσιν ἱερὸν κοινόν . . .
Ἀθῆναι μὲν οὕτως ὑπὸ τοῦ πολέμου κακωθεῖσαι τοῦ 'Ρωμαίων αἰθῆς 'Αδριανοῦ
βασιλευσόντος ἠρώθησαν. At Athens and elsewhere this emperor is said to have
erected temples without any image of a god. It was believed that he meant
them to be dedicated to himself. At a later period the Christians imagined
that he had intended them for the pure worship of Jesus. Lampridius in *Alex.*

But of all these gorgeous structures none was so illustrious as the Olympieum, the great national temple of the Hellenic Jupiter, commenced on a scale far transcending any monument of Greek or Roman piety by the aspiring genius of Pisistratus. The work had languished through the ages of Athenian independence. The bold conception was revived by the usurper Epiphanes; and the temple, profaned and rifled by the brutal violence of Sulla, was restored and carried a stage nearer to completion by Augustus, aided by the contributions of eastern potentates.¹ Still the Olympieum stood a colossal fragment, embracing within the limits of its columned precincts an area of two hundred yards square, in which it precisely corresponded with the Temple of Jerusalem. But the fane itself far exceeded in magnitude its eastern rival, its dimensions being 171 feet in width and 354 in depth, while its columns rose to the enormous height of 60 feet and upwards. Such at least was the design, still unfinished, which Hadrian undertook to complete, in its full proportions. Among the decorations of this marvellous edifice, in which sculpture, painting, and gilding bore a part, were numerous statues of the imperial builder himself, placed as votive offerings by states and sovereigns. But the king of gods and men occupied the cell in a glorious image of gold and ivory, which emulated the masterpiece of Phidias at Olympia. This combination of materials may seem grotesque to our uneducated eyes; but the Greeks had cultivated their taste in the application of colour to statuary, and they had learnt to estimate, perhaps not unduly, the beauty of the soft warm tint which the glowing metal may cast over the paler substance.²

Sever. 41. It is most likely that these ideas were founded merely on some casual or temporary omission. According to Spartian, however, Hadrian set up an altar to his own divinity at Athens, and in Asia at least he did not scruple to build himself temples. Spartian, *Had.* 13.

¹ See above, ch. xxxiii.

² Pausan. *Attic.* 18. 6, 7. The painting of statues, and the mixture of metals used for them, had often a conventional meaning. Thus Pliny, xxxiv.

Vehement was the gratitude of the Athenians for the accomplishment of a work which placed their city once more at a summit of architectural splendour; but there was little that they could offer in return to the master of the Roman world. The title of Archon, by which their first municipal officer was still designated, whose functions were religious rather than political, carried with it only the charm of its antique associations. Such as it was, however, it seems to have been tendered to Hadrian at a much earlier time, when as a mere private visitor, yet unconnected with the reigning family, he had displayed his interest in Athens by devoting himself to her special studies. The style of Olympius, which they now appended to his name on coins and marbles, bore a direct reference to the munificence with which he had lodged the lord of heaven in the most sumptuous of earthly habitations; but it conveyed, no doubt, an indirect compliment of another kind; for Pericles, the greatest of their historic heroes, had been styled Olympian, for the thunders of his eloquence, and the overwhelming power he wielded in the state. Athens still maintained her præeminence as the mistress of eloquence and learning. Athens was the ancient classic university of the civilized world. The splendour of an individual reputation might suffice to found an academy at other places of educational resort; the disciples of a popular rhetorician or philosopher might maintain for two or more generations the school of which he had laid the foundations; but the ephemeral brilliancy of Rhodes, Tarsus or Halicarnassus, was lost in the constant and steady light which had beamed for five centuries from the halls of Plato and Aristotle. While hundreds of erudite professors of every

The Athenians
requite him
with the title
of Olympius.

Athens the
great univer-
sity of the Ro-
man world.

40., says of a certain artist: "æs ferrumque miscuit, ut rubigine ejus per nitorem oris relucente exprimeretur verecundiæ rubor." See on this subject Feuerbach, *der Vatican. Apollo*, p. 184, foll. The reflection of gold on ivory imparted a warm tint, and the appearance of a supernatural body; at least such was the understanding between the artist and the more enlightened of the worshippers.

art, and of all learning, wandered from the centre of ancient discipline to instruct in their own homes the patrician youth of Italy and the provinces, mankind still recognised in undiminished force the necessity of a course of study at Athens itself, to equip the complete scholar and gentleman, the most accomplished product of intellectual training.¹

The instruction, however, imparted in these venerable seats was of a highly conventional character. None but a weak enthusiast here and there maintained with the fervour of genuine belief the tenets of any one of the philosophic sects, each of which had reigned in turn, or had contended with rival claims in the schools of Athens. On every side it was tacitly acknowledged that the limits of each specific dogma had been reached, and that either all must be abandoned together as shadowy and baseless, or each be allowed to hold its authority unquestioned within its own province. To admit the first alternative would have been treason to the sovereignty of the human understanding, an insult to the memory of the mighty dead; but the second was well adapted to recommend itself to an age still devoted to study, still curious about psychological laws, but which despaired of arriving at conclusive results in any direction. The broad principle that all ancient doctrines were true enough to be taught, was the charter of the great Grecian university. Accordingly, all such doctrines were admitted to the rights of domicile in it; all were established, and endowed with public salaries or by private liberality; all were allowed to be equally important for the education of the ripe and perfect scholar; and the

Conservative
character of
the university
of Athens.

¹ Aulus Gellius, writing at Athens about this time, gives a glimpse occasionally of the habits of the young men who met for study at Athens. His account is perhaps rather satirical. See the description of the supper given by the philosopher Taurus (*Noct. Att.* xi. 13.); and of the way in which the students kept the Saturnalia: "quærebantur autem res hujusmodi: aut sententia poetæ veteris lepide obscura, non anxie; aut historiæ antiquioris requisitio; aut decreti ejuspiam ex philosophia perperam invulgati; aut captionis sophisticæ solutio; aut inopinati rariorisve verbi indagatio." xviii. 2.

teachers of all lived together in a state of conventional antagonism not incompatible with entire social harmony, and almost jovial good fellowship. Academics and Peripatetics, Stoics and Epicureans, Pyrrhonists and Cynics disputed together, or thundered one against another simultaneously through the morning, and bathed, dined, and joked in company with easy indifference all the evening. Of new opinions, of real inquiries, of exclusive enthusiasm they were all perhaps equally jealous; but Athens was eminently a conservative University, and the men who yearned for actual truth, and still dreamed, if it was but a dream, that after six hundred years of free speculation, the truth had been ever missed, but might yet be discovered, did not generally repair to the Academus or Lyceum in search of it.

If, however, the matter of this scholastic teaching was so little regarded, if it was understood that there was nothing new to be said for Academism or Peripateticism, that conviction and persuasion on the most venerable subjects of ancient debate were altogether out of date, the manner of teaching and expounding seemed to be thought worthy of more serious attention than ever. The language, the style, even the gesture and demeanour of the lecturer, attracted hearers who would have paid little heed to vehement assertions of the truth and soundness of his principles. To imbue the disciple with the idiom of the best Attic literature, was now considered essential to a liberal education; and the writings of this age, which emanated from the schools of Greece, are coloured by a direct and not unsuccessful imitation of Xenophon and his contemporaries. In expounding the arts of composition there may have been more originality. Had the masters of rhetoric of a more genial era taken equal pains with their successors in the second century to mould the forms of speech and writing, we should scarcely have lost all traces of their labours, while we retain the technical precepts of Hermogenes, illustrated by the laboured exertions of Dion, Maximus and Aristides. The name of Sophist had long recovered from whatever

The professorial system established at Athens.

obloquy had been cast on it by Socrates, and was extended to embrace the doctors and professors in all branches of literary acquirement. The nobility of Rome thronged to listen to their eloquence; crowds not of scholars and neophytes only, but of mature and accomplished men of the world, attended upon their lectures, admired and discussed their respective merits, attached themselves to their classes, and caught up their watchwords, though no germ of truth perhaps had been discovered or suggested by them through the long period of their sovereignty. For half a century these lecturers had been salaried by the imperial treasury, and though the academic system had not yet attained its full development, we may speak even now of the established hierarchy of the sophists at Athens, the chief of whom occupied what was called by way of eminence *the throne* of the university. Of the three principal chairs, those of Sophistries or Rhetoric, of Politics and Philosophy, that of Sophistries took the first rank, and was endowed with a stipend of 10,000 drachmæ, equivalent perhaps to 500*l.*;¹ but the stipend was probably the least part of the emoluments of a place which commanded the whole market of private tuition. One Chrestus declined a recommendation for it to the emperor, in whose patronage it lay, saying in his affected way, *The myriad makes not the man*; but in fact he was the well-fed tutor of a hundred private pupils, a position which no imperial liberality, then or since, could easily improve. The *throne*, however, possessed the advantage of being a place for life. Philagrus, who once ascended it, may have won the eminence by the vigour and vehemence of his character: he had been known to box the ears of an inattentive listener. But the mild Aspasius, who lounged indolently on his cushions to old age, and cared not, while he drew his stipend, whether his audience listened or not, was reproached by

¹ Philostratus, *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 2. 20. Comp. Lucian, *Eunuch.* 3. Philostratus elsewhere seems to state one talent, 25*l.*, as the salary of the πολιτικός ὄρωνος at Athens, which I do not understand. *Vit. Soph.* ii. 20. Tatian (*Apol.* p. 70.) mentions the sum of 600 aurei, or guineas.

public opinion for not resigning a distinction of which he proved himself unworthy.¹

The fashion of playing at oratory by sham contests on factitious subjects enjoyed a marvellous vitality in the ancient world. At Rome the genuine contests of the forum were replaced by the exercises not wholly unreal of the imperial bar; in many modern states the absence of political discussion has been partly compensated by the sphere of influence allotted to the pulpit; but it is one of the problems of social history to account for the interest so long felt or feigned in the schools of ancient Greece, for the mere shadows of thought and speculation by which they were occupied. The facile eloquence of the sophists seems to have been exercised equally in the illustration of philosophical tenets, and in the discussion of themes for declamation. The clever and learned personages enumerated in long succession by Philostratus in his *Lives* of the most distinguished of the class, who were the admiration of Athens and all Hellas for more than a century, are celebrated by him rather for their rhetorical powers than for their skill in the exposition of dogmas, though their philosophical science seems to be taken for granted. His panegyric, enlivened as it often is by anecdotes of wit and character, fails for the most part to convey to us distinct personal conceptions; nevertheless the general character of the class is portrayed with much vividness. Born in various cities of Greece and Asia, and generally gravitating to Athens as their natural home, it is curious to observe how many of them were related to the Roman aristocracy, and could boast

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 8. 83. Marquardt in Becker's *Alterthümer*, iii. 2. p. 87., has collected in a note the principal passages which relate to the endowment of learned men by Vespasian and his successors. Of Hadrian, Spartian says expressly, c. 16.: "omnes professores et honoravit et divites fecit . . . doctores qui professioni suæ inhabiles videbantur, ditatos honoratosque a professione dimisit." The liberality of Hadrian seems to have been further extended by Antoninus Pius and Alexander Severus.

a connexion with senators and consulars. Such was the case with Polemon, to whom Trajan granted the privilege of exemption from taxes, an exemption extended by Hadrian to his posterity; whom his own countrymen at Smyrna so praised and flattered, that he could venture to say to the Athenians, *You have some credit, gentlemen, for being intelligent hearers; allow me to test your capacity; who was so eloquent that the eloquent Herodes dared not speak after him; but who dying at the age of fifty-six, which in other professions might be considered old, was reputed a mere youth in sophistry, for the sophist continues learning to the last, and storing up the fruits of exercise and experience.*¹ Such was the great Herodes himself, descended on the one side from Roman consulars, on the other from the mythic Æacidæ, the inheritor of immense riches, which he used so well, that Plutus, it was said, though blind with others, opened wide his eyes when he showered blessings on this general's favourite; who found a treasure, which when he declared to Nerva it was more than he could use, the emperor in his boundless confidence bade him then abuse; who received the name of Atticus not only for his love to Athens, like the Roman Pomponius, but for the endowments he had heaped upon it, and the buildings he had erected; but who was so devoted to rhetorical study, so anxious for success in art, that being deputed to address the emperor for his favourite city, and unfortunately breaking down from nervousness, he rushed to the river bank—so ran the story—to drown himself.²

Polemon.

Herodes Atticus.

The vanity and frivolity of these masters of word-fence have often been depicted, and the most salient features of

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 25. On the occasion of the dedication of the Olympieum, Polemo ascended the steps of the portico and made an enthusiastic harangue to the people: ὁ δὲ ὡς περ εἰώθει, στήσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς ἡδὴ παρισταμένας ἐννόας, ἐπαφῆκεν ἑαυτὸν τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρηπίδος τοῦ νεῷ διελέχθη πολλὰ καὶ θαυμάσια, προοίμιον ποιοῦντος τοῦ λόγου, τὸ μὴ ἄλλαι τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁρμὴν γενέσθαι οἱ. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 3.

² Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 1.

The philosopher and historian Plutarch.

their life and conversation may easily be made to appear more ridiculous than they really were.

They have had the misfortune, however, of being most particularly described to us by a generation even more frivolous than their own, and we must not accept without reserve the character of the men and their system as portrayed by the pencil of Philostratus. The remains of Plutarch's voluminous writings show that he rose far above the level of the Polemon or Herodes of our biographer. He was at least an earnest believer in his own creed, and conscientious in the practice of the virtues he commended. In the reign of Domitian, and almost under the shadow of Domitian's palace, the sage of Chæroneæ lectured to a Roman audience on the highest ends of life, and the true measure of happiness and goodness. His teaching had for the most part a direct moral object, with little tendency to speculative refinements. He cared not for the name of any sect or leader, but pleaded the cause of moral beauty in the interest of truth only. What his precepts wanted in authority was abundantly supplied by the examples with which his wide historical knowledge could illustrate them. Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* are eminently philosophy teaching by example. And in estimating the moral aspect of the times, and the influence of the teachers, we must not fail to remark the soundness of this writer's moral judgments as displayed throughout his compositions. There is no work perhaps of antiquity that Christian parents can put so securely into the hands of their children; the Christian statesman may draw lessons from it in wisdom, and the Christian moralist in virtue. The work is, in another point of view, a curious monument of its epoch. The author's object was to draw a fair and friendly comparison between the Greeks and the Romans, his own countrymen and the foreigner; between the conquered and the conquerors, the spoiled and the spoilers, the slaves and the masters; between men whom other censors would have ever delighted to contrast as the spiritual Hellene and the brutal Italian, or again as the cringing Græculus and the lofty

Romulides. Yet, throughout this long series of lives, this glittering array of virtues and vices, personal and national, there is no word, I think, of subservience or flattery, of scorn or vanity, of humiliation or triumph, to mark the position of the writer in the face of his Roman rulers. Whether we consider the book as addressed to the Greeks or to the Romans, the absence of any such indications of feeling is undoubtedly remarkable. To me it seems most honourable both to the one people and to the other; moreover, it is invaluable for the insight it gives us into the prevalent sentiment of the unity of all races and classes under a common dispensation.

Of the celebrated sophist, Apollonius of Tyana, the most illustrious preacher of this dispensation, little can safely be advanced, inasmuch as all our knowledge of him comes through the distorting medium of the Apollonius of Tyana. romance, miscalled his life, by Philostratus. The remarks which would naturally be challenged by that singular performance belong to the historian of the third century rather than of the second. All that can here be properly said of its hero is, that he deserves notice as the first perhaps of those itinerant homilists who began, from the Flavian period, to go about proclaiming moral truths, collecting groups of hearers, and sowing the seed of spiritual wisdom and knowledge on every soil that could receive it. It was by the first Christian teachers that the example of this predication was set; and the effect produced on thoughtful spirits by the conspicuous career of St. Paul and his associates is evinced, to my apprehension, by the self-imposed mission of Apollonius in the second, and of Dion in the third generation after them.

Of the life, the conduct, and the specific teaching of Dion Chrysostomus, so called by his contemporaries for his eminent eloquence, we possess details on which we can rely, whence we may learn what service a Dion Prusaens, surnamed Chrysostomus. high-minded sophist might perform in the interests of morality.¹ In his younger days, while yet a mere

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 7.: Δίωνα δὲ τὸν Πρυσαιῶν οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτι χρηρὴ προσηύπειν διὰ τὴν ἐς πάντα ἀρετὴν. Ἀμαλθείας γὰρ κέρας ἦν, τὸ τοῦ λόγου.

rhetorician, this man had come to Rome from his birthplace Prusa, and had attached himself to a distinguished personage, possibly to Flavius Clemens, in whose fall he became himself involved. Domitian threatened him with death, and he fled, taking with him, by the advice of the Delphic oracle, only two books, one of Plato and one of Demosthenes.¹ He retired to a Grecian colony on the frontier of the empire; but even amid the marshes of the Getæ he deemed it prudent to forego his real name, and disguise himself in rags, and sometimes apparently to plunge into deeper concealment on the banks of the Borysthenes. At the moment, however, of Domitian's death, Dion was in the neighbourhood of a Roman encampment on the Danube, and here, when the soldiers resented their emperor's assassination and murmured at the reported accession of Nerva, he harangued them with irresistible eloquence, and secured their adhesion to the elect of the senate.² Nerva received him with open arms. Under this prince and his successor he recovered more than his former estimation, and became a prime favourite with Trajan, who often invited him to his table, and carried him in his chariot, and was wont, according to the story, to reply to his most charming discourses, *I admire you exceedingly, but I don't pretend to understand a word you say*. It would seem that in the haunts of civilized and educated men, the common-places of philosophy, with which the sophist was abundantly furnished, passed current for wisdom and truth; but it was among the ruder sons of nature on the borders of the Scythian wilderness that, on being earnestly questioned, the emptiness of such rhetorical flourishes flashed upon him, and he set himself to examine his own conscience and spiritual belief. The result was the abandonment of the word-war of the dog-

¹ Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xiii. xlv. The terms in which he speaks of the patron with whom he was involved are remarkable, and seem to indicate that it was a case of suffering for opinion: *διὰ ταῦτα ἀποθανόντος δι' ἃ πολλοῖς καὶ σχεδὸν πάντων ἰδόκει μακάριος*.

² Philostr. l. c. who quotes from Homer: *ἀντάρ ὁ γυνώθη ῥακῶν πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς*.

matists, and the embrace of the simple morality of Socrates, as the only man among the ancients whose homely sense could grapple with the problems of human nature, or satisfy the inquiries of an awakened intelligence.¹ The effect of this discovery upon the pagan philosopher may be likened to that of religious conversion on the Christian disciple. Henceforth Dion devoted himself to the practice of virtue, and preached the duties which he practised. He expounded not the metaphysics of Zeno or Epicurus, but their moral maxims; diffused the knowledge of divine law and Providence, taught moderation to the haughty, patience to the impetuous, resignation to the afflicted. To Trajan on the throne he set forth the beauty of justice and the true dignity of power; to the turbulent mobs of the Italian cities he showed how the order of nature, the appointed course of the sun and stars, might enforce the duty of obedience; the fantastic and drunken crowds of Alexandria he rebuked for their levity and intemperance; he startled the vanity of the Athenians by exposing the worthlessness of their rhetoric and sophistics. He illustrated with sense and humanity the well-known paradox of the Stoics that the good man alone is free, and used it as a text for preaching forbearance towards the slave.² Dion and others like him have been called the popular preachers of natural religion, and the improved tone of society at this period, of which we have discovered many traces, may in part be justly ascribed to the religious enthusiasm with which they discharged their self-appointed office. The name of Chrysostom may have already reminded us of the most illustrious of the ancient Christian orators, and his speeches, of which a large number are preserved, may be compared, with little disadvantage, with the sermons of the bishop of Constantinople, for their warm appeals both to the heart and the conscience of their hearers.³

¹ Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xiii.

² Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xiv. p. 233.; xv. p. 238, foll. See Wallon, *l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 34.

³ Dion Chrysostom is well described, and not perhaps too highly estimated, by M. Martha, in the *Revue Contemporaine*, Paris, 1857.

But the foundation of morality, as laid by the sophists, could rest only on the judgments of the conscience, and its dim and fluctuating ideas of goodness and holiness. At Athens, as elsewhere throughout the empire, there were other teachers at work who pleaded the direct constraint of authoritative dogmas. They appealed at once to men's hopes and fears, by the doctrine of a resurrection and a future retribution. This was the creed preached of old on Mars's hill by Saul of Tarsus, as the divine complement to the ethics of Zeno and Epicurus. This was the keystone required to bind together the broad arch of principles which spanned the duties of mankind. In Athens, the home of argument and logic, the faith of Christ could not be propounded as a bare ceremonial law; it must be set forth as a metaphysical creed; and as such it attracted some at least among the philosophers themselves, and carried off men of learning and acumen from the shadowy illusions of the Lyceum and the Academus. The Christian apologists of the second century, such as Justin and others, converts themselves from the Gentile philosophy, excited the interest and admiration of their hearers by plunging them into the mysteries of their new faith, and especially the deepest of all mysteries, the doctrine of the Trinity. If the wisdom of the world was repelled by the story of Christ's humiliation and sufferings, it was attracted, on the other hand, by the promise revealed at his resurrection, and this cardinal dogma became the stronghold of the new faith in its contests with the Gentile moralists. The presence of the emperor in Athens, and the curiosity with which he surveyed all the conflicts of human opinion, encouraged the Christian teachers to address him as a truth-seeker himself, and to defend their own bold and novel creed against the reasonings, the sneers, and the violence of their antagonists. Though devoted from early habit to the ancient formulas of Grecian wisdom, and generally content to roam from the halls of one familiar teacher to those of another, Hadrian was nevertheless inquisitive and restless by nature, and the vague aspirations suggested to

The Christian
teachers and
apologists.

him at his initiation into the mysteries at Eleusis,—for he had pried into the deepest mysteries of the heathen world,—could not fail to arouse him to the pretensions of a creed which was founded directly on the doctrine of Immortality.¹ It must be remembered, moreover, that Christianity, which even at Rome assumed to uninstructed eyes the appearance of a Greek speculation, at Athens, the very centre of Greece, seemed to emanate directly from the schools. Accordingly Hadrian listened graciously to the apologies of Quadratus and Aristides, who appeared perhaps before him in the actual garb of philosophers;² and the mildness he exercised towards the believers may not unreasonably be ascribed to the influence of their reputed learning and wisdom.³

Hadrian's toleration of the Christian faith.

¹ Spartian, *Had.* 13.; Euseb. *Chron.* a. 122. This emperor's curiosity, particularly in religious matters, is affirmed by a consensus of authority. Tertullian, *Apol.* 5.: "curiositatum omnium explorator." Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 5.: πάντα τὰ περίεργα πολυπραγμονῶν. Julian, in *Cesar.*: πολυπραγμονῶν τὰ ἀπόρρητα. Like many of the Romans he demeaned himself very differently in Rome and in the provinces; hence it could be said of him at Rome, notwithstanding the character he then bore abroad: "sacra Romana diligentissime curavit, peregrina contempsit."

² Justin the Martyr, whose apologies were addressed to Hadrian's successors, expressly states of himself that he continued after his conversion to wear the philosopher's habit. (*Dial. cum Tryph.* init.) Aristides was also a convert from the heathen philosophy, but the same, however probable, cannot be said with confidence of Quadratus, who is only known to us as the bishop of Athens. See Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 23. S. Hieron. *De Vir. illustr.* 19, 20. The only existing fragment of Quadratus asserts in the boldest manner the miracles of resurrection: οἱ θεραπευθέντες, οἱ ἀναστάντες ἐκ νεκρῶν. • Compare Routh, *Reliq. Sacr.* i. 71. Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 153. note.

³ From Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1. 66., and Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 8, 9., we learn that Hadrian, in answer to Minucius Fundanus, prefect of Asia, directed him to keep strictly to the law in his treatment of the Christians, and not to yield to popular clamour against them. It would seem that since Trajan's rescript the law had shaped itself into a more definite form; still the mode and extent of executing it appears to have been left generally to the discretion of the local authorities. It is strange, however, and shows how little we really know of the Roman procedure, to find the Christian apologist Melito addressing Hadrian's successors with the assertion that the persecution of the disciples in Asia in

But Athens was on the whole the great conservative University of the Roman world, and the noble youths who flocked to it for the teaching of the sophists, imbibed a conviction that the whole circle of learning had been there described, and no further discoveries in ethics or metaphysics remained to reward industry or genius. At Athens the spirit of inquiry was restrained by the influence of great names and long revered associations. Thence the student returned to Rome with his ears closed against all novel opinions, full of enthusiasm for the past, satisfied with the assurance that the existing generation, if there was no new truth for it to discover, was blest in the enjoyment of the accumulated discoveries of ages. Though bred himself in the school of self-complacency, and fitted by his powers of acquisition to master all the knowledge which Athens had stamped with her sanction, Hadrian was not so easily contented. From temper, from experience, and from the freshness of intellect which he nourished by constant movement, he still retained an interest in every pretension to novelty, and traced with undiminished zest all the eccentricities of the human mind.¹

Hadrian dissatisfied with the conservative spirit of Athens.

He crosses over to Alexandria, A. D. 130, 131.

He crossed over from Athens to Alexandria, and there a new scene opened upon him. The Egyptian capital bore, like that of Greece, the character of a University. Thither also the youth of every province flocked to attend the lectures of another tribe of sophists ;

his time is something quite new : τὸ γὰρ οὐδε πώποτε γενόμενον νῦν διώκεται τὸ τῶν θεοσεβῶν γένος καινοῖς ἐλαινόμενον δόγμασι κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν. Euseb. *Ecel. Hist.* iv. 26.

¹ It was from his own love of eccentricity that he pretended to prefer Cato to Cicero, Ennius to Virgil, Antimachus to Homer. Spartian, *Hadrian*. 16. In compliment to this fancy an Alexandrian poet composed 24 books of a work to which he gave the name of Anti-Homerus. Orion ventured on the *tour de force* of haranguing him in a Latin panegyric, a task to which few Greeks would have been equal. Hadrian repaid these flatteries by writing a long poem in Greek, in praise of Alexandria and its founder. "Cum his professoribus et philosophis libris vel carminibus invicem editis sæpe certavit." Spartian, c. 15. Hadrian's visit to Alexandria may be dated A. D. 130, 131. Gregorovius, p. 39.

and there too professors of every science were maintained at the public expense, or by endowments which had existed from the era of the Ptolemies. The academic life of Alexandria, such as it had already continued for four centuries, was cast nearly in the type with which our modern ideas are most familiar. The Museum was an assemblage of lecture rooms, private chambers, common halls, and libraries, in which the professors dined, studied and disputed together, the envy and admiration of a hundred generations of pupils.¹ The Brucheum was a similar institution affiliated to the Museum. The emperor Claudius had endowed a separate college in which his own histories were appointed to form a substantial part of the course of instruction. The Temple of Serapis accommodated the remains of the Ptolemæan library which had escaped from Cæsar's fire. There it continued to receive large additions, which made it once more, in the decline of the empire, the great storehouse of ancient learning. But Alexandria was the University of progress. Though the city of the great Macedonian had now existed for near five hundred years, its ripe age was not encircled with the antique associations which rendered Athens peculiarly venerable. Alexandria had no mythology and no legendary poetry. She had not grown through the obscurity of immemorial ages; she was a creation of historic times. From the first her career had been marked out for her by the fiat of her founder; she had been devoted originally to the material pursuits of commerce; and now in her maturity, she was an emporium for the interchange of ideas and speculations along with the products of various climes and industries. Alexandria was accustomed to welcome novelty in thought as well as in arts and manufactures. With her discovery was at a premium; and even ethics and metaphysics had their ex-

Liberal and inquisitive character of the Alexandrian University.

¹ Strabo, xvii. 1. Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 22. Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 16.: "diuturnum præstantium hominum domicilium." For the public libraries of Athens and Alexandria see A. Gellius, vi. 17. There is a full account of Alexandria, the Serapeum, the Brucheum, the libraries, &c., in Ammianus, l. c.

changeable value among the curious of all nations, who met at the junction of three continents; for her ships were the feelers with which she touched on Greece and Italy, while her site was debateable land between Africa and Asia.¹ Through Alexandria ran the current of Eastern thought which now set most strongly westward. The Greek philosophy domiciled in the capital of the Ptolemies was stirred to its depths by converging streams from Syria, Persia and India. Judaism and Christianity were established side by side with the gross idolatry of the Copts, and the elemental worship of the Sabæans. The fantastic theosophy of the Gnostics, of which the local and the spiritual filiation are equally unknown to us, exercised an unacknowledged influence wherever the human mind was deeply moved by the problems of man's relation to the Deity. Into this new world of conflicting opinions Hadrian threw himself with vehemence and ardour. He made himself at home in the discussions of the Alexandrian schools, and was more entertained than enlightened by the wayward imaginations which they paraded before him. The impression made upon him is discovered from a letter in which he describes to Servianus the intellectual aspect of the place.² *I am now become fully acquainted,* he says, *with that Egypt which you extol so highly. I have found the people vain, fickle and shifting with every breath*

¹ The isthmus of Suez or the stream of the Nile have generally been specified as the boundary of the two continents: but in Cæsar's time the line of demarcation was supposed popularly to run through the centre of the city of Alexandria. *De Bell. Alex.* 14.: prædicant partem esse Alexandriæ dimidiam Africæ."

² The genuineness of the letter may be questioned on the ground of Verus being mentioned as Hadrian's son. It would appear from Spartian that this prince was not adopted till the year 135. On the other hand, it is not absolutely necessary to conclude that the letter was written from Alexandria at the time of Hadrian's visit in 131. But the importance attached to the Christians and the interest shown in them, not to mention the premature degeneracy imputed to them, seem to me to throw much doubt upon it. The letter is not recorded by Hadrian's biographer Spartianus, but occurs incidentally in the life of a later emperor by Vopiscus. *Vit. Saturnin.* c. 8.

of opinion. Those who worship Serapis are in fact Christians; and they who call themselves Christian bishops are actually worshippers of Serapis. There is no chief of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian bishop, who is not an astrologer, a fortune-teller and a conjuror. The patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is compelled by one party to worship Serapis, by the other Christ. Then, after a digression on the busy and restless character of the people, he continues: *They have but one God* (alluding to their idolatry of lucre)—*him Christians, Jews and Gentiles worship all alike.*¹ The ardour of the Alexandrians in the pursuit of wealth is thus pungently satirized, and we can understand how the bustle of a great commercial emporium would surprise an observer accustomed to the dignified somnolence of an old-fashioned city like Athens; but the sneer thus loosely hazarded against the opinions current among them may require some closer consideration.

It must strike us with surprise that the philosophic emperor, a smatterer in all knowledge, and a spy upon all opinions, should direct his remarks, not to the state of Gentile philosophy, but to that of Jewish and Christian belief. Possibly, if we knew the occasion of this letter, which, from certain allusions it contains, must belong to a date some years later than Hadrian's actual visit, the explanation of this circumstance might be more apparent; but taking the document as it lies

Interest taken by Hadrian in the dogmatic teaching of the Jews and Christians.

¹ Such is the explanation usually given of this allusion to the *One God*; according to the reading: "unus illis deus est. Hunc Christiani," &c. See Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 156. But the passage is probably corrupt. One MS. gives: "unus illis deus nullus est. Hunc," &c., which Mr. Sharpe, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. 168., follows, rendering it: "Their one God is nothing. Christians, Jews and all nations worship him;" referring to the prevalent monotheism among the Oriental sects at Alexandria. Serapis combined more than one divinity in his own person: Ἡλῖος, Ὀψρος, Ὀσίρις, Ἀναξ, Διόνυσος, Ἀπόλλων. Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* iii. 15, 16.: "Hence arose the opinion which seems to have been given to Hadrian, that the Egyptians had only one God, and his mistake in thinking that the worshippers of Serapis were Christians." Sharpe, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. 168.

before us, we must conclude that the phenomena of Judaism and Christianity constituted, even at this period, the most salient features of the intellectual movement at Alexandria. The sophists of the Museum, whether standing on the old ways, and proclaiming the tenets of the old Greek philosophy, or whether busied in contriving the eclectic system which has assumed a place in mental history under the name of the New Platonism, attracted less remark from a curious but intelligent observer, than the professors of a religious doctrine, Jewish or Christian. Hadrian, indeed, cosmopolite though he was in tastes and habits, could not transcend the limits prescribed by his birth and training. He discovered in the views of the Alexandrians a tendency to Oriental, and even to Jewish ideas, which revolted rather than attracted him. The Gnostic theories of the Divine Nature with which they were impregnated would be to him strange and preposterous, while the seriousness they affected, and the positive belief they required, would be felt as a burden by one who was accustomed to regard all philosophy as a mere playing with truth. Hadrian, however, mingled freely with the sages and professors of the Egyptian capital; he conversed, debated, and banqueted with them; accepted from them the same flattery, and dispensed to them in return the same liberality which had marked his intercourse with the rival university. Here, too, he increased the salaries of the public teachers, and encouraged the youth of the empire to make literature their business. We may believe that he extended his protection to the preachers of Christianity also, and helped to raise them to the high place they long held among the learned at Alexandria. The praises of the early Church were not ill bestowed on the prince to whom we may thus be indebted for the liberal piety of Clement and Origen. Here, as at Athens, he left abundant tokens of his munificence, in the erection of useful and noble buildings, and in the reconstruction of a quarter of the city. But the mob of Alexandria had been always notorious for turbulence and indocility. The fanaticism of the Coptic race was here stimulated by

political jealousy. In the rural districts a dispute about the genuineness of an Apis had recently goaded it to bloody conflict, and the religious dissensions of Ombi and Tentyra had been polluted by actual cannibalism.¹ In the city, however, the rivalry of the Copts and Jews, together with their mutual hatred of the dominant Greek race, had engendered chronic disaffection and resistance to all legal authority. In vain had the Roman government forbidden its citizens to reside in Egypt, and excite by their arrogance or cupidity the susceptibilities of the native population. In vain was the independence of the proudest of cities more tenderly handled than that of any other in the empire. The rabble of the streets, who controlled the local administration, despised every title or dignity: they insulted the emperor himself as recklessly as they would have hooted a Greek sophist or a Jewish rabbi. When Hadrian's favourite Antinous was drowned in the Nile, a misfortune with which all the world that pretended to self-respect affected a decent sympathy, the Alexandrians alone made a mock of their ruler's weakness, and the letter above cited seems to have been written under the actual smart of their unfeeling ribaldry.² *I have given these people, Hadrian said, everything*

Death of Hadrian's favourite, Antinous, A. D. 181.

¹ Spartianus, *Had.* 12., refers to a riot at Alexandria on the subject of the Apis: "Alexandrina seditione turbatus, quæ nata est ob Apin, qui cum reperi-
tus esset post multos annos turbas inter populos creavit, apud quem deberet locari omnibus studiose certantibus." The best account of the Apis is in Am-
mian. Marcell. xxii. 14. Of the respect with which Hadrian would affect to
approach the subject we may surmise from what has been already said of him.
Augustus had treated the bull-god with contempt; earlier emperors had wan-
tonly slain him. But Germanicus consulted his oracle, and Titus had paid him
honour. The bloody quarrel of Ombi and Tentyra is the theme of Juvenal's
Sat. xv., and is referred with most probability to the year 119, the third of
Hadrian, from the words, "quæ nuper consule Junio," xv. 27.

² Dion, lxi. 11.; Spartian, *Had.* 14. Hadrian seems to have said that
Antinous fell by accident into the water. Other accounts, however, asserted
that he drowned himself voluntarily in obedience to an oracle which demanded,
for the life of the emperor, the sacrifice of the object dearest to him. How-
ever this may be, Hadrian lamented his death with extravagant weakness, pro-
claimed his divinity to the jeering Egyptians, and consecrated a temple in his

*they asked for. I have confirmed all their ancient privileges, and added new, which they could not help acknowledging in my presence. But no sooner had I turned my back than they lavished every kind of insult on my son Verus, and my friend Antinous. I wish them no worse, he added in his bantering tone, than that they should feed on their own chickens; and how foully they hatch them I am ashamed to say.*¹

The character of the Alexandrians is painted in one of the most interesting of Dion's orations, which is also curious as a specimen of the lay-preaching of a converted rhetorician, and of the extent to which freedom of speech was allowed in lashing the follies of the sovereign people.² The sophist's charges against them relate to their vanity and frivolity, their extravagant devotion to public amusements, singing, playing, and racing, and also to the bloody conflicts in which their amusements too often resulted. But Dion visited Alexandria before the time of Hadrian, and could not resent as it deserved the ingratitude the people manifested towards a gracious prince, from whom, though parts of his conduct might provoke a smile, they had experienced only unmerited kindness. Hadrian did not condescend to take vengeance on his persecutors: two

Ingratitude of
the Alexan-
drians.

honour. He gave the name of Besantinoopolis to the city in which he was worshipped in conjunction with an obscure divinity named Besa. Deification in Egypt assumed the form of identification with a recognised divinity. Origen, edit. *Celsum*, iii.; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 8.; Sharpe, *Hist. Egypt*, ii. 161. The late discoveries in hieroglyphics have shown that the obelisk on the Monte Pincio at Rome was dedicated to the memory of Antinous in the joint names of Hadrian and Sabina. Smyth, *Roman Medals*, p. 110.

¹ Vopiscus, l. c.: "quos quemadmodum fœcundant pudet dicere." Aristotle had not shrunk from mentioning how the Egyptians hatched their fowls' eggs in dung. Casaubon, in loc. Besides the apparent anachronism of the allusion to Verus, it may be said that neither the matter nor the style of this letter is such as we should expect from an imperial correspondent. Vopiscus professes to take it from the volumes of Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian.

² Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xxxii. Ammian. Marcell. xii. 6. speaks more particularly of their litigious and quarrelsome temper: "*Ægyptii genus hominum controversum, et assuetudine perplexius litigandi semper lætissimum,*" etc.

generations later an emperor of a different stamp washed out indignities not more crying in a sanguinary massacre.¹ The mild philosopher who now commanded the thirty legions shook off the dust of the turbid city from his feet, and made a pilgrimage, as a peaceful antiquarian, to the wonders of old Thebes. The name of Hadrian does not now appear among the rude inscriptions which can be still decyphered on the Egyptian monuments; but some Greek lines scratched on the legs of the broken statue of Memnon, show that Sabina, at least, visited that mysterious fragment, and heard the music which issued from it at sunrise.² Hadrian ascended likewise the Casian Mount, crowned with a celebrated temple of Jupiter, and restored the chapel of Pompeius at its foot, which had been recently overthrown by the Jews. His taste and piety were further attested by a short and pithy epigram on the uncertainty of fortune, which he caused to be inscribed upon it.³

If Hadrian was dissatisfied with the people of Alexandria, he was disgusted and incensed with the inhabitants of Anti-

¹ Herodian, iv. 16, 17.

² The inscription is given by Eckhel, vi. 490., and many others :

Ἐκλιον αὐδήσαντος ἐγὼ Πόπλιος Βαλβίνος
Φωνάς τὰς θείας Μέμνονος ἢ Φάμενος : κ. τ. λ.

The date, which is specified in it, may be fixed to 131 or even 130, quite at the commencement of Hadrian's residence in Egypt, if not a little before his arrival. The statue was at this time lying in fragments, and the sounds were supposed to issue from the broken pieces. Mr. Sharpe considers the marvel a direct imposture. For the fondness of the Romans for visiting antiquities, which has been referred to before, see Epictetus, *Dissert.* i. 6. : εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν μὲν ἀποδημεῖτε, ἢν εἰδῆτε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Φειδίου, καὶ ἀτίχημα ἕκαστος ἡμῶν οἰεταὶ τὸ ἀνιστόρητος τούτων ἀποθανεῖν.

³ Dion, lxi. 11. : “ τῷ ναοῖς βρῖθοντι πόση σπάνις ἐπλετο τέμβου. Comp. Spartian, *Hadr.* 14. : Appian, *Bell. Civ.* ii. 96. The historian, or his epitomizer, brings Hadrian from Greece, through Judea to Mount Casius, on his way into Egypt. I suppose him, on the contrary, to have entered Judea from Egypt, where he promulgated the decrees which produced the Jewish insurrection in 132. But the exact sequence of his movements must be considered as very uncertain.

Hadrian visits Antioch, and is disgusted with its frivolity and voluptuousness.

och. This city, the third in population and importance of the empire, the capital of the once powerful kings of Syria, and honoured for now nearly two centuries by the residence of the Roman proconsul, who approached nearest in rank and power to the emperor himself, was abandoned, beyond any of the great centres of wealth and luxury, to the indolent enjoyment of voluptuous ease. The Antiochians made no pretensions to learning or philosophy, but they were addicted to vile and vicious superstitions, in which the simple ideas of a remote antiquity were corrupted into gross licentiousness, and deformed by the impurest orgies. Placed in the centre of a rich and populous region, and on the highway which united the East and West with the South, they offered a mart for the productions of many realms, and their city was the resort of traders as well as idlers from the three continents. The unrivalled beauty of its situation, a fertile plain watered by an abundant river, visited by breezes from the sea at fifteen miles' distance, and sheltered from fiercer winds by a lofty table mountain in its rear, presented an alluring place of residence, and made Antioch the favourite retreat of the idle and self-indulgent. The attractions of its suburb, named Daphne from the laurel groves which encircled the fane of Apollo, were famous throughout the West, and often proved the Capua of the Roman legions. The remoteness of this Eastern capital from Rome, and the fatal though unavoidable policy, by which the legionaries and their chiefs, together with the concourse of the prefect's civil attendants, were suffered to remain for many years together in so luxurious a banishment, emboldened the Italians to cast off the restraints of national decorum, and yield to the fascinations of the Syrian Circe, who floated the austere habits of the West with keen-edged satire or boisterous ridicule. Again and again the emperors called them to arms to chastise the Jew, to protect the Armenian, or to threaten the Parthian; but every interval of tranquillity relaxed the bonds of discipline, and the Syrian proconsul was less formidable to the

prince at Rome when at the head of the soldiers in the field, than when he winked at their irregularities and debauched them at head-quarters. The frequent occurrence of disastrous earthquakes, contributed perhaps to make the people reckless in their manner of life, and disposed them to enjoy the passing hour, and drown in tumultuous excitement the fears of impending danger.

Hadrian had been known to the Antiochians while still a subject. Doubtless they had made sport with their usual levity of the weak points in his character, which were sufficiently obvious. They knew the circumstances under which he had succeeded to the purple, and many a ribald joke had passed among them touching the favour to which he was surmised to have owed it. Though surrounded on his next appearance in their city with the terrors of sovereign power, they still could not control their bantering humour, and as an emperor and a philosopher he was perhaps equally offended at the frivolity of a people who had no sense of dignity themselves, nor could respect the dignity of others. Among the names of princes who illustrated this spot with their buildings, that of Hadrian, the universal builder, finds no place. On the contrary, he took from it some of its cherished privileges, and subjected it to the supremacy of the provincial seaport of Tyre.¹

He is insulted
by the Antiochians.

Such are the incidents connected with Hadrian's sojourn in the principal cities of his wide dominions. There would be no advantage in specifying all the places of less importance which he visited in the course of his unwearied peregrinations. Many of them are

Hadrian continues his progress through Asia Minor.

¹ Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* iii. 297. Spartian, *Hadr.* 14.: "Antiochenses ita odio habuit ut Syriam a Phœnice separare voverit, ne tot civitatum metropolis Antiochia diceretur." At a later period the emperors found it necessary to remove the head-quarters of their army from so corrupt a locality. Procopius (*Bell. Pers.* i. 17.) speaks of it as entirely denuded of soldiers: ἡ δὲ ἀφυλακτός τε καὶ στρατιωτῶν ἔρημός ἐστιν οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδένα τῶ ταύτης δήμῳ ὅτι μὴ πανηγύρεων τε καὶ τρυφῆς μέλει, καὶ τῆς ἐν θεάτροις αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλων φιλο-νεικίας.

incidentally mentioned by the historians and biographers; others are notified by the legends of his coinage, in which he appears as the *Restorer* of above thirteen places or provinces, a title which seems to imply a personal visit, accompanied by some eminent benefaction.¹ He erected temples at Smyrna and Cyzicus, buried in the Rhæteum on the plain of Troy some colossal bones, supposed to be those of Ajax, and founded in Bithynia a town to which he gave the name of Hadrianothera, in commemoration of a successful hunting-match.² On the frontiers of Armenia he received the homage of the petty chiefs who infested the confines of the empire, and impressed on Pharasmanes, the king of the Alani, a due sense of Roman power and dignity, by clothing his gladiators, by way of mockery, in the gilded vestments with which that simple potentate had sought to purchase his favour.³ At the same time he gratified the Parthian Chosroes, who had resumed his ancestral seat on the Euphrates, by restoring to him his daughter made captive by Trajan. He promised also, it is said, to send back to him the golden throne which the conqueror had carried off from Susa; but this magnanimous restitution was never actually made.⁴ These overtures of reconciliation may have been timed to divert that still powerful monarch from assisting the Jews in the great struggle which broke out in Palestine in 132, as soon as Hadrian's presence was withdrawn from the neighbourhood.

I have not attempted to follow Hadrian's steps accurately. The scattered hints received from our authorities have been variously pieced by the critics, and do not admit, perhaps, of confident manipulation. I presume, however, that he passed through Syria in 132, and

Hadrian once
more revisits
Athens.
A. D. 133, 134.

¹ See Eckhel, vi. 487, foll. The countries or cities thus mentioned are Achaia, Africa, Arabia, Bithynia, Gallia, Hispania, Italia, Libya, Macedonia, Mauretania, Nicomedia, Phrygia, Sicilia. Hadrian travelled with a company of architects and artificers, ordered after the fashion of a legion of soldiers: "id specimen legionum militarium . . . in cohortes centuriaverat." Victor, *Epit.* 28.

² Dion, lxi. 10.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 20.

³ Dion, lxi. 15.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 13. 17.

⁴ Spartian, *Hadr.* 13.

after some further wanderings in the Eastern provinces, returned for the last time to Athens, and there spent the winter of 133-134. At Athens he might witness the completion of his buildings, and enjoy once more, with the greater zest from the comparison with Alexandria and Antioch, the manners and conversation of his favourite residence. But Rome, after all, the centre of business and of duty, was the place to which the imperial pilgrimages gravitated. Wherever else ambition, cupidity, or thirst of knowledge and adventure might call him, during his years of activity, it was at Rome, or within sight of Rome, that every genuine Roman wished to retire in declining age, and compose himself for the last journey to the resting-place of his ancestors. Hadrian had already reached old age, and had governed the empire sixteen years; his health too was much debilitated, and he had no reasonable prospect of lengthened days, when, in 134, he took up his residence in his capital, and ceased from his restless wanderings. Here, however, he continued to employ himself with unabated industry. He established a university at Rome, under the name of the Athenæum, after the type of the cherished city whence it derived its name, and he endowed its professors on a scale befitting its metropolitan character.¹ The throne of rhetoric at Rome took precedence of all its rivals, both in rank and emolument. But the liberal sciences were exotics in Italy, and produced no popular teachers and no celebrated schools. The activity of the Roman mind was running towards law and jurisprudence; but this was a practical subject which formed no part of the speculations to which the career of academic study was prescriptively confined. While philosophy and rhetoric were stationary or retrogressive, the principles of law were rapidly advancing, and Hadrian was himself unconscious of the so-

And takes up
his residence at
Rome,
A. D. 134.

Establishment
of the Athenæum at Rome.

¹ Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 10, 8. Victor, *Cæs.* 14.: "ita Græcorum more . . . gymnasia, doctoresque curare occæpit, adeo quidem ut etiam ludum ingenuarum artium quod Athenæum vocant, constitueret; atque initia Cereris Liberæque, quæ Eleusinia dicitur, Atheniensium modo Roma percoleret."

cial transformation which was already taking shape under his auspices. At Rome we behold in him the busy and earnest administrator, surveying from the centre of his vast dominions the character and conduct of his subordinates, keeping all his instruments well in hand, assiduous in selecting the best agents, and strict in requiring an account of their agency, putting to use the local and personal knowledge acquired by

Hadrian's
buildings at
Rome.

so many years of travel and inspection. Amidst this unceasing round of occupation, it was his recreation to behold the glorious buildings still rising at his command in every quarter of the city. It is almost wearisome to turn again and again to the subject of the imperial architecture, which has formed a feature in the narrative of almost every reign in succession; but we are bound to remark that the edifices of Hadrian at Rome surpassed in magnificence all the works of his predecessors.¹

His temple of Rome and Venus, with its double cells, placed fantastically back to back, was at once the largest in size and the most splendid in its features of the religious edifices of the capital. Raised on a lofty base-ment on the eastern slope of the Velia, and looking down into the hollow in which the Colosseum was injudiciously placed, it might command even more remark and admiration

Temple of
Rome and Ve-
nus.

than that masterpiece of imperial grandeur. The Mausoleum or Moles Hadriani, which Hadrian had created for himself on the further bank of the Tiber far outshone the tomb of Augustus, which it nearly confronted; of the size and dignity which characterized this work of Egyptian massiveness, we may gain a conception from the existing remains; but it requires an effort of imagination to transform

Mausoleum or
Moles Ha-
driani.

the tomb of Augustus, which it nearly confronted; of the size and dignity which characterized this work of Egyptian massiveness, we may gain a conception from the existing remains; but it requires an effort of imagination to transform

¹ Spartian, *Had.* 19., gives a long enumeration of these works. It was remarked that Hadrian modestly refrained from inscribing his name upon any one of them, except the temple he dedicated to Trajan. Among other undertakings he employed an architect named Decrianus to remove the colossus of Nero, the face of which had been altered into a Sol, from its place on the slope of the Velia to another site. He does not seem to have accomplished the design of Apollodorus to erect a companion statue of Luna.

the scarred and shapeless bulk before us into the graceful pile which rose column upon column, surmounted by a gilded dome of span almost unrivalled, and terminating in the statue of the beatified builder, whose remains reposed below. The Mole of Hadrian was, next to the Colosseum, the most distinguished specimen of the style of architecture which we designate as Roman, whencesoever really derived; which by raising tier upon tier of external decorations, after the number of stories required within, adapted to civil and domestic purposes the monumental grandeur of the Grecian. Besides these and other erections of his own, Hadrian is noted as the restorer of many famous buildings of an earlier date, such as the Septa, the Pantheon, the temple of Augustus, and the baths of Agrippa. But his services in these cases may have been but slight. However liable Rome was to suffer from fires, earthquakes and inundations, we can hardly suppose that these structures, most of which had been repaired by Titus or Domitian, could already require again extensive renovation.¹

Hitherto, Hadrian had been able to follow the policy which had before recommended itself to his predecessor, of shunning, by long absence from the city, collision with his jealous nobility. At the same time he had skilfully avoided the alternative which alone had presented itself to Trajan's mind. He had kept the legions in good humour without indulging them in the exhausting amusement of perpetual warfare.² When,

Hadrian
adopts for a
successor L.
Cæcilius Com-
modus Verus.
A. D. 185.

¹ The Tiburtine villa of Hadrian is entirely destroyed. Its site is said to be ascertained, and its limits, eight miles in circuit, may perhaps be traced. It embraced, besides the residence and quarters for the guard, buildings modelled on the Lyceum and Academy, the colonnade called *Pœile*, the *Prytaneum*, &c., at Athens, a *Canopus* which may have represented some edifice at Alexandria. In its gardens was a space laid out after the fashion of the vale of Tempe, a *Tartarus*, and perhaps, on the other hand, *Elysian Fields*. Spartian, *Had.* 26.; Victor, *Cæs.* 14.

² Spartian, *Had.* 21.: "expeditiones sub eo graves nullæ fuerunt; bella etiam silentio pæne transacta." At the same time the writer adds: "a militibus, propter curam exercitus nimiam, multum amatus est, simul quod in eos

however, he finally took up his residence in Rome or his villas in the vicinity, the prince of the senate, the first citizen as he proclaimed of the republic, found himself the mark of an envious aristocracy, encouraged by his condescension to fancy themselves really his equals, and disposed, at the first sign of his health failing, to intrigue against him. The successor of Trajan and Nerva had vowed never to put a senator to death; and the only instance in which this hope had been hitherto disappointed, was excused by the precipitation of the senate itself. But such a restriction could not possibly be maintained, if the emperor's person was to be exposed to the machinations of senatorial ambition. Nor was Hadrian's good-nature proof against the irritation caused by increasing infirmities.¹ Sensible of his own weakness, and anxious to the last to keep faith with his subjects, he determined, having no child of his own, to choose a colleague, and adopt an heir and a successor, as the best security for his own peace, the most direct check on the irregular aspirations of his nobles. But the empire, as it would seem, was singularly deficient in men of eminence befitting such an elevation. I do not lay much stress upon the charge of jealousy made against him, for rejecting the presumed claims of personages so obscure as Terentius Gentianus and Plætorius Nepos.² Nor, in our ignorance of the circumstances, need we dwell on the strange intimation, that he was so jealous of the pretensions of his brother-in-law Servianus, then ninety years of age, as to put him to death on a frivolous pretext, in defiance

liberalissimus fuit." Victor relates (*Epit.* 14.) that Hadrian used to boast that he had gained more for the empire in peace, by the skilful use of bribes to foreign potentates, than his predecessors by war; but Spartian, c. 17., gives a different colour to these pretensions: "Regibus multis plurimum detulit; a plerisque vero etiam pacem redemit; a nonnullis contemptus est."

¹ Of this good-nature several instances, some of them eccentric enough, are recorded: but such anecdotes seem hardly worth repeating. See, however, Spartian, *Hadrian.* 16, 17. 20. The trial of wit between the emperor and the poet Florus in the verses, "Ego nolo Caesar esse, etc.," is well known.

² A. Plætorius Nepos is only known to us as a commander in Britain, from the various inscriptions in the neighbourhood of the Roman wall.

of every obligation. It is said, indeed, that many other magistrates were sacrificed at the same time, some by judicial sentences, others by assassination.¹ At this period, also, the empress Sabina died; and as her dislike of him was well known, and it was even rumoured that she had taken precautions against conception, lest the world should be afflicted by such another monster, it became currently reported that she was taken off by poison.² All these charges may be allowed to stand or fall together; the last is expressly discredited by a far from friendly historian. Nor am I inclined to pay much regard to the insinuation, that his choice of a successor was finally determined by mere unworthy favouritism. L. Ceionius Commodus Verus was a young noble of high birth and family distinction; but the Romans refused to allow him any personal merit, and affirmed that his adoption and appointment were made in opposition to the universal feeling, and required to be purchased, as it were, of the people and soldiers by largesses, donatives and shows.³ Such liberalities, it is enough to say, would follow the designation of an heir to the empire as a matter of long-established usage.

The descriptions we have received of this child of fortune seem meant to reproduce the traditional features of the most noted voluptuaries. They represent, however, a certain fantastic finery of manners, to which it would be difficult to find an exact parallel. The habits of Verus combined the effeminacy of Mæcenas with the dissoluteness of Otho, and the extravagance of Petronius; but he possessed neither the shrewdness of the first, the courage of the second, nor the genial though reckless gaiety we attrib-

Character of
Verus.

¹ Spartian, *Had.* 23.

² Victor, *Epit.* 14. Spartian mentions the rumour as “fabula dati veneni,” a phrase he would hardly have used if he wished to accredit it. Victor adds a report hardly less to the emperor’s discredit, if true, which is very doubtful, that she killed herself in disgust at his ill-treatment, “prope servilibus injuriis.”

³ Spartian, l. c.: “adoptavit Ceionium Commodum Verum invitis omnibus, eumque, Ælium Verum Cæsarem appellavit.” Dion, lxi. 17.: Καίσαρα ἀπέδειξε.

ute to the last of these voluptuaries. The few anecdotes recorded of him give a picture of the times, if not of the actual man,—of their emasculate dissipation and indolent elegance,—not unimportant to our historical review. Thus Verus, we are told, recommended himself to the emperor by the invention of a pasty which became the favourite dish at the imperial table.¹ He was wont to take his mid-day rest, with his concubines, on an ample couch enclosed in mosquito-nets, stuffed with rose-leaves, and strewn with a coverlet of woven lilies, amusing himself with the perusal of Ovid's most licentious compositions. He equipped his pages as Cupids, with wings on their shoulders, and made them run on his errands with a speed which human muscles could not maintain, till they dropped. When his spouse complained of his infidelities, he gaily bade her understand that *wife* is a term of honour, not of pleasure.² This despised matron, however, is said to have borne him several children, who lived to enjoy and prolong the honour and fortunes of the family. It was added, even by those who so described him, that if there was nothing to praise, there was also little to reprove in him, and that he might be regarded as at least a tolerable ruler. The historian allows, indeed, that in addition to the grace and beauty of his person, Verus was dignified in countenance and impressive in his delivery, besides being a good composer of verses. We may suspect some false colouring in this delineation, and that Hadrian's choice was more judicious and more honourable than it is represented. The office of prætor, to which Verus had been previously appointed, required under a vigilant master both industry and capacity; and

¹ Spartian, *Ælius Verus*, 5.: "tetrapharmacum seu potius pentapharmacum, quo postea semper Hadrianus est usus, ipse dicitur reperisse." Hadrian's fondness for the pleasures of the table is mentioned among other of his tastes or accomplishments by Fronto (*De Peritiis Asiensibus*, 3.), "orbis terrarum non regendi tantum sed etiam perambulandi diligentem, modulorum tamen et tibicinum studio devinctum fuisse scimus, et præterea prandiorum opimorum esorem optimum fuisse."

² Spartian, l. c.: "uxor enim dignitatis nomen est, non voluptatis." Our language can hardly rival here the compactness of the Latin.

after his adoption, this pretended minion of the court was sent to take the emperor's place at the head of the Pannonian legions, on the most exposed of the frontiers. Here too he had occasion to exert his prowess in the field, and obtained from the same historian the praise of a respectable, if not a brilliant commander. The sentiment with which in his first hours of weakness he is said to have courted death—that an emperor should die in health and not in sickness—deserves to be recorded in his honour.¹ The expression of his numerous busts is manly as well as handsome, and indicates intelligence, frankness, and liberality, far removed from the common type of Roman beauty, in which regularity of feature and noble bearing scarcely redeem the hard, stern, and narrow character which plainly underlies them. The portraits of Trajan and of Verus seem to belong to climes, ages and races far removed from one another.

But, after all, the wisdom of the choice was not tested by actual results. The health of the new Cæsar began to fail soon after his adoption; and when it was observed that he had not strength to wield the arms of the emperor, Hadrian is said to have exclaimed with bitterness, that he had spent his money to no purpose, and leant on a rotten wall, which could not bear the weight of the republic or even his own.² These harsh words were carried to the sick man's ear and aggravated his disorder. The officious talebearer was disgraced; but this reparation was of no avail, and the invalid expired on the calends of January 138, in the third year of his feeble sovereignty. Hadrian would not suffer the holiday of the new year to be profaned by tokens of public sorrow. For Verus the portals of the colossal mausoleum for the first time opened; but his surviving colleague felt his own end ap-

His premature
death.
A. D. 138.
A. U. 891.

¹ Spartian, *Ver.* 6.: "sæpe dicens, sanum principem mori debere, non debilem."

² Spartian, l. c.: "ter milles perdidimus . . . siquidem satis in caducum parietem incubuimus."

proaching, and became more anxious than ever to provide for the peaceful transmission of power after his decease.¹

It was cited, indeed, as a mark of Hadrian's heartlessness, or levity, that when urged after Verus's death to make a fresh adoption without delay, he replied that he had already formed his resolution while Verus was still living. He commanded numerous busts and statues of his favourite, directed the senate to

Hadrian
chooses for his
successor T.
Aurelius Anto-
ninus,

proclaim his divinity, and allowed temples to be raised to him in various places. But after a brief interval he called the most illustrious senators to his bedside in the Tiburtine villa, and announced that his choice of a successor had fallen on T. Aurelius Antoninus, a man of mature age and approved

and requires
him to adopt
M. Annius Ve-
rus and L. Ve-
rus.

abilities, who seems to have been universally acceptable. At the same that he made this adoption, he required his new son, who was also childless, to nominate heirs; indicating to him for this preferment Marcus Annius Verus, his own sister's son, and Lucius Verus the son of his deceased colleague, the one at the time a youth of seventeen, the other a mere child, and both already favourites with him.² Yet the choice of the elder was undoubtedly determined by the promise of his staid yet generous character; and if, in regard to the younger, Hadrian yielded to a natural preference, he might fairly hope the best from an amiable infant to be trained under a parent

¹ The uncertain character of the imperial succession is strongly marked in the instance of Verus. It is nowhere said that he was associated in the empire, as Trajan had been associated by Nerva, or Piso by Galba. Spartian says of him significantly: "qui primus tantum Cæsaris nomen accepit." Hadrian honoured him, "imperatorio funere;" but the biographer again remarks: "neque quidquam de regia nisi mortis habuit dignitatem." Nevertheless Ælius Verus has always been enumerated in the imperial series both by ancients and moderns.

² Spartian, *Hadrian*. 24.; *Ver.* 7. He excused the adoption of the younger of these with the kindly expression: "habeat respublica quodcumque de Vero;" which, as the writer remarks, is opposed to the notion put forth by some that he repented of the favour he had shown to the father. Comp. Dion, lxi. 21.

and a brother of approved virtue. He had now done his best for the future welfare of the empire, and tormented by maladies beyond the reach of medicine, and conscious that his days were numbered, the sense of having well discharged his greatest duty as a prince may have afforded him relief and consolation. That he gave way under a painful disorder to excessive irritation, and even put innocent persons to death from caprice and vexation, is charged against him by historians whose ill-nature or incapacity is sufficiently apparent.¹ But it became the duty of the gentle Antoninus to soothe his bursts of passion, and shelter those they might threaten to overwhelm; and the gratitude of the senators or courtiers doubtless prompted them to exaggerate the beneficial influence of their patron. The sufferings of the sick man, we are assured, were most acute. Despairing of medical relief, he resorted to the arts of the magicians; but the imprecation of Servianus was fulfilled, and in his agony his last wish was for death, yet he was unable to die.² Given over by the physicians, and vainly tended by astrologers and diviners, he implored his own attendants to put him out of pain by the sword or poison. To one of his slaves, a barbarian from beyond the Danube, he pointed out the exact spot, which he had ascertained and marked on his breast, where the heart could be reached most promptly and certainly; but the fierce swordsman fled in horror from his presence. It is said that he even swallowed in his despair substances which he knew to be deleterious. At last his powers gave way, and he expired, worn out by a long disease, which seems to have been dropsical.³ Among his last words, delivered perhaps in a brief interval of ease, was a playful address to his departing spirit, which if it has attained more success than it deserves as a philosophic utterance,

His increasing
infirmities and
irritation,

and death,
A. D. 138.
A. U. 891.

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 23. 25.; Victor, *Cæs.* 14.; *Epit.* 28.

² Dion, *lxi.* 27., *lxxvi.* 7.

³ Dion, *lxi.* 22.: Spartian, *Hadr.* 24.

betrays at least no sign of the gloomy terror or remorse which haunt, no doubt, the deathbeds of tyrants.¹

Hadrian died on the tenth day of July, A.D. 138 (A.U. 891), having lived about sixty-two years and a half, and reigned twenty-one years wanting one month. There is Estimate of his character. none of the emperors about whom we are so much disappointed in the scantiness and questionable character of our materials for estimating him. We must acknowledge, indeed, a general consistency in the impression conveyed by Dion, Spartian, and the still briefer epitomists. All indicate, more or less clearly, the conflicting elements in his varied character, his earnestness and his levity, his zeal for knowledge and frivolity in appreciating it, his patient endurance and restless excitability, his generosity and his vanity, his peevishness and his good-nature, his admiration of genius, and at the same time his jealousy of it.² Such contradictions may possibly be reconciled by considering the circumstances of the times, and the manifold interests of a complicated civilization combined with the absence of a controlling principle and a guiding object. Not in Hadrian

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 25. The biographer treats these famous verses very lightly. He adds: "tales autem, nec multo meliores, fecit et Græcos." To me the force and character of this simple ejaculation consist in its abruptness, brevity, and uncouthness, like the verses we make in a delirious dream. Polished and paraphrased by modern translators, it becomes a trifling commonplace, hardly worthy of the considerable poets who have exercised their talents upon it.

"Animula, vagula, blandula,	Soul of mine, pretty one, fitting one,
Hospes comesque corporis,	Guest and partner of my clay,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,—	Whither wilt thou hie away,—
Pallidula, rigida, nudula—	Pallid one, rigid one, naked one—
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?"	Never to play again, never to play?

² Thus Spartian describes him (*Hadr.* 10.) as, "severus, lætus; comis, gravis; lascivus, cunctator; tenax, liberalis . . . sævus, clemens; et semper in omnibus varius." Victor (*Epit.* 14.) says: "varius, multiplex, multiformis; ad vitia atque virtutes quasi arbiter genitus, impetum mentis quodam artificio regens, ingenium invidum, triste, lascivum, et ad ostentationem sui insolens, callide tegebat; continentiam, facilitatem, clementiam simulans, contraque dissimulans ardorem gloriæ quo flagrabat."

only, but in all the eminent men of his time, Trajan himself being no exception, we miss that unity of aim and complete subordination of all the faculties to a ruling idea, which exalt the man of talent into the man of genius. Nevertheless, if this be true of emperors and statesmen, still more is it true of the lesser men who related the incidents of their careers, and criticized their characters. We may fairly doubt whether the compilers of the meagre abridgments which contain all we know of them, could understand the greatness of any really great men, if such in their own day there were. Dion Cassius, if we may connect with his name the fragments preserved by the manipulations of Xiphilin, may have acquired an idea of Cæsar and Cicero not wholly unworthy of their merit, from the better writers whom he could consult about them; but where left to his own observation, or to the estimate of persons nearly contemporary with himself, he may have completely failed to rise to the true height of the object before him. Of the feeble biographer Spartianus, it may not be unjust to affirm that he would have spoilt even better materials than the best that lay within his reach. For my own part I am dissatisfied with the portraiture we have received of Hadrian. I cannot think that we have the real man before us. I imagine that he was really greater than he is represented, and that many of the stories to his disparagement have been invented or coloured. But I can only refer this impression to what I remark of the character of his administration, in which he undoubtedly reconciled with eminent success things hitherto found irreconcilable; a contented army and a peaceful frontier; an abundant treasury and a lavish expenditure; a free senate and a stable monarchy; and all this without the lustre of a great military reputation, the foil of an odious predecessor, or disgust at recent civil commotions. But the merit of Hadrian is above all conspicuous in the decision with which, the first of Roman statesmen, he conceived the idea of governing the world as one homogeneous empire. Suddenly, but once for all, he discarded even in theory the tradition of a Roman

municipality, as the master and possessor of all the soil of the provinces. He recognised in theory both conquerors and conquered as one people, while he left their practical equalization to the gradual and spontaneous influences which were plainly working thereto. He visited every corner of his dominions, and greeted in person every race among his subjects, making no distinction between Roman and Briton, African and Syrian. The title of citizen might still remain, and certain fiscal immunities, though balanced by countervailing burdens, continue to maintain its nominal preëminence; but substantially there was now little difference between the status of the Roman and his subjects; and even that little was vanishing of its own accord, and wanted only a stroke of the pen to erase it in due time from the statute-book. But though thus liberal in his own ideas, the prince of the senate had still to humour the prejudices of his nobles. He must not suffer the Roman to degrade himself in his own eyes by indulging unworthy indolence. Accordingly, Hadrian discarded the freedmen of the palace, the instruments whom his predecessors had thrust between themselves and the honourable industry of the knights; he rivalled Augustus himself in the reverence he paid to the toga, the symbol of Roman majesty, and required the senators and knights always to wear it in public. It seems that upon the citizens generally this staid observance could no longer be enforced.¹

On the whole, I am disposed to regard the reign of Hadrian as the best of the imperial series, marked by endeavours at reform and improvement in every department of administration in all quarters of the empire. The character of the ruler was mild and considerate, far-seeing and widely observant, while the ebullitions of passion which clouded his closing career were confined at least to the small circle of his connexions and associates.

The reign of
Hadrian the
best of the im-
perial series.

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 21, 22. When he saw a slave of his own walking as an equal between two senators, he ordered his ears to be boxed, and forbade him to converse with personages who might at any time become his masters.

His defects and vices were those of his time, and he was indeed altogether the fullest representative of his time, the complete and crowning product, as far as we can judge, of the crowning age of Roman civilization. His person and countenance, which we have unusual His figure and countenance. means of figuring to ourselves from the number of his busts, statues and medals, corresponded well with his character. With Hadrian the Roman type of features begins to disappear, Hadrian is neither Greek nor Roman; he is of no race nor country; but rather what we might deem the final result of a blending of many breeds and the purest elements. He reminds us more than any Roman before him, of what we proudly style the thorough English gentleman, with shapely trunk and limbs, and well-set head, no prominent features, no salient expression, but a general air of refinement and blood, combined with spirit and intelligence. His face and figure are both eminently handsome, though inclining to breadth and bulk. His countenance expresses ability rather than genius, lively rather than deep feelings, wide and general sympathies rather than concentrated thought or fixed enthusiasm. The sensual predominates in him over the ideal, the flesh over the spirit; he is an administrator rather than a statesman, a man of taste rather than a philosopher. A casual observer would perhaps hardly notice that Hadrian is the first of the Romans whose bust is distinguished with a beard.¹ Hitherto, though the arrangement of the hair varies from one generation to another, or follows the personal taste of the wearer, every public man at Rome scrupulously shaved his cheeks, lip and chin. But Hadrian Atticized as well as philosophized, and he might reasonably incline to cherish the natural appendage which betokened both the Grecian and the sophist. Some, indeed, whispered that he suffered hair to grow on his chin, to conceal a physical blemish; but this

¹ Spartian, *Hadr.* 26.: "statura fuit procera, forma comptus, flexo ad pectinem capillo, promissa barba, ut vulnera quæ in facie naturalia erant tegeret."

explanation seems far-fetched, and the fashion set by Hadrian and adopted generally by his successors, seems rather to indicate a change in the feelings of the people, and their inclination to disregard the special distinction of race in deference to views more enlightened and genial.

CHAPTER LXVII.

EARLY CAREER OF THE EMPEROR ANTONINUS PIUS.—ATTITUDE OF THE BARBARIANS.—THE WALL OF ANTONINUS IN BRITAIN.—HIS PATERNAL GOVERNMENT AT HOME.—HIS INDULGENCE TO THE CHRISTIANS.—HIS VIRTUES AND HAPPINESS.—VICES OF THE EMPRESS FAUSTINA.—EARLY PROMISE OF M. AURELIUS. HIS TESTIMONY TO THE VIRTUES OF ANTONINUS.—DEATH OF ANTONINUS PIUS, AND REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER OF HIS EPOCH.—REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL ELEMENTS OF ROMAN SOCIETY.—1. THE POPULACE OF THE CITY.—2. THE PROVINCIALS.—PROGRESS OF UNIFORMITY.—EXTENSION OF THE FRANCHISE.—DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL LAW.—3. THE SENATE; ITS PRIDE, PRETENSIONS AND IMBECILITY.—4. THE PRÆTORIANS AND THE LEGIONS.—THE FINAL SUPREMACY OF THE SOLDIERS INEVITABLE.—(A. D. 138–161: A. U. 891–914.)

THE adopted son of Hadrian was in the maturity of his fifty-second year, when he was admitted to a share in the sovereign power. After the fashion then prevalent in the noblest families, he combined in his own person the gentile names of several ancestors. His style at full length had been Titus Aurelius Fulvius Boionius Arrius Antoninus, which he now exchanged for that of Titus Ælius Hadrianus Antoninus, to which he added at once the titular designation of Augustus and Cæsar, and soon after his accession, as we shall presently notice, that of Pius. The name of Aurelius Fulvius had been borne by his father and grandfather, both of whom had been consuls, and whose family was sprung from Nemausus in Gaul.¹ His mother was an Arria, and both an Arrius and a Boionius had been among his maternal ancestors.² He was married to an

Names and titles of the emperor Titus Antoninus Pius.

¹ Capitol. *Anton. P.* 1. The emperor was born at Danuvium, and educated at Lorium, in Etruria, which became his favourite residence.

² Capitol. l. c.: "avus maternus Arrius Antoninus, homo sanctus, et qui Nervam miseratus esset, quod imperare cœpisset."

Annia Galeria Faustina, by whom he had had four children, two sons and two daughters; the sons had died young before his advancement, and of one of the daughters we have no further account. The other, however, named Annia Faustina, he united to the young Aurelius, her cousin, whom at Hadrian's instance her father had himself adopted. But of all his names the most interesting is that of Antoninus, which he first introduced to the distinguished place it occupies in Roman annals, the origin of which however we can trace no further. Fourteen emperors passed away before this designation, sanctified by the noblest associations, was suffered to disappear from the imperial style.¹ So deep was the impression made on the Romans by the virtues of the two illustrious princes, who assumed the sovereignty at the death of Hadrian with the acclamations of the senate and people, and the loyal consent of the legions. The demise indeed of their late jealous master was felt as a relief by the nobles in the city. They pretended to have trembled for their lives and fortunes during the pangs of his last illness, and in their zeal to do honour to his successor, muttered a refusal to grant him the apotheosis which had been hitherto denied only to the most hateful of tyrants. Antoninus meanwhile removed the body from Baie to Rome, and entombed it in the gorgeous mausoleum long prepared for its reception. When the senators observed the respect with which he was disposed to treat it, they discovered another mode of flattery, declaring that he had rescued many of their

He receives
the surname of
Plus.

¹ Capitol. in *Opilio Macrin.* 3.: "enimvero Pius primus, Marcus secundus, Verus tertius, Commodus quartus, quintus Caracallus, sextus Geta, septimus Diadumenus, octavus Heliogabalus Antonini fuere." These eight princes are enumerated to show the fulfilment of a certain prediction; but others, such as Pertinax, Julianus, Severus, and Macrinus himself, might be added. Alexander Severus thus addressed the senate: "Antoninorum nomen, vel jam numen potius, quale fuerit, meminit vestra clementia." The senate replied: "vicisti vitia, vicisti crimina: Antonini nomen ornavisti." But Alexander persisted in declining the name, as not belonging to his family. The senate would have called him Magnus, and at last forced upon him the title of Augustus. Lampridius in *Alex. Sev.* 9. (A. D. 222, A. U. 975.)

order from Hadrian's death-warrants, and on this account, or as others said, in acknowledgment of his dutiful affection for his unworthy parent, decreed him the surname of Pius; a surname eagerly repeated by the gratitude of his countrymen, and destined to become the most distinctive of all his appellations.¹ The opposition to Hadrian's consecration was now withdrawn; his temple rose in due time at Rome, and an order of flamens was appointed to serve for ever at his altar.

In noble simplicity of character, and devotion to the good of the state they were invited to govern, the two Antonines deserve to be classed together. For three and
 twenty years they sate side by side in public, and were nominally colleagues in the empire:

His early career and character.

but while the elder governed by virtue of his mature age and tried abilities, the younger trained himself reverently after his parent's example, with assiduous and painful self-examination. Though vying with one another in their noble qualities and the excellence of their administration, in their temper and education there was a marked difference. Aurelius became, by study, reflection, and self-exercise, the most consummate product of the ancient philosophy, while Pius is a singular instance of an accomplished Roman contenting himself with the practice of virtue, and genuine disregarding the questions of the schools. From his early years Antoninus had been engaged in the active discharge of official duties. Sprung from a race of curule magistrates, he had been bred in the traditional maxims of official life, and had become

¹ The origin of this title is variously explained: 1. because Antoninus supported his infirm parent in the senate; 2. because he saved certain senators, as mentioned in the text; 3. because of the honours he extorted from the nobles for his predecessor; 4. because he had taken measures to prevent his suicide; 5. because of the general clemency and goodness of his own character. We may observe that the title first appears on the coins of Antoninus immediately after the death of Hadrian; and that the festival he instituted in honour of Hadrian was specially designated "Palia." Artemidorus, writing in Greek, calls it ἐνσέβεια. Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 36.

qualified for distinction himself by long training in the career of honours under an able and vigilant emperor. Thence he had succeeded to the government of a province. He had been appointed one of the four consulars to whom the administration of Italy was confided, and had finally been raised to the prefecture of Asia before Hadrian's experienced eye fixed on him, as the fittest man in the empire to lighten his own burdens, and conduct the machine he had put in good working gear by his long labours.¹ Antoninus, however, though himself a simple man of business, could respect speculation in others, and encouraged his adopted son to employ his leisure, while yet young, in examining the bases of wisdom and virtue under the ablest teachers.

Alone of all the chiefs of the empire, Antoninus has had the fortune to escape the animadversion of the historian Dion.

Unanimous
testimony of
antiquity to his
virtues.

Reduced as we are at this period to the meagre epitome of Xiphilin, the book which was devoted to the narrative of this reign had perished, save a few brief sentences, even before the time of the abbreviator; and instead of the harsh and captious commentary with which Dion reviewed the career of the emperors, we have only the flowing panegyric of Capitolinus, which if devoid of critical sagacity, is free at least from the vice of ill-nature. The brief notices of Antoninus found elsewhere, as in the abridgments of Victor and Eutropius, seem to have been derived from kindred sources with those of the biographer, while the Christian Orosius concurs in the unvaried strain of panegyric; for of all the princes of this age Antoninus alone was free from the sin of persecution. It is a relief indeed from the chequered tissues of splendid virtues and degrading vices, to meet once at least, in the course of our long review, with a character of unstained goodness, with one man faultless as far as we can trace him, in act and intention, and yet not wanting in manly sense and vigour. Trajan governed the empire from the camp and the frontiers; Hadrian from

¹ Capitol, *Anton.* P. 3.

the provinces and the schools; Antoninus devoted himself entirely to Rome, and during his long reign of nearly a quarter of a century never absented himself for a day from the city or its near environs. He had seen that even the peaceful progress of the emperor through the provinces, however personally frugal, became an occasion of severe exactions.¹ But the genuine moderation of this practical sage enabled him to maintain throughout his career unbroken harmony between the prince and the senate. He made on his accession the customary declaration, that none of the order should suffer death by his sentence; a declaration which pledged him to moderation and economy, that he might not be constrained to recruit his finances by confiscation. This promise he kept faithfully to the end. We hear indeed of more than one conspirator against him; but of these Attilius was proscribed without his concurrence by the senate; Priscianus slew himself, and the emperor forbade inquiry to be made for his accomplices. It would be small satisfaction, he said, to learn by such investigations that he was hated by a number of his fellow citizens.² Once only, in the case of a parricide, he sentenced a noble culprit to confinement on a desert island, where nature herself would, as he said, justly forbid him to exist.³ While however all the public establishments were maintained on the most frugal scale, he was munificent in his gifts and largesses. He acquitted the promises of Hadrian at his adoption, completed many of his predecessor's buildings, and remitted the coronary gold expected on his accession, to the Italians entirely, to the extent of one half to the provincials.⁴ When the treasury, which he received full from Hadrian, became at

¹ Capitol. *Anton. P.* 7. : "gravem esse provincialibus comitatum principis etiam nimis parci."

² Capitol. l. c. Victor, *Epit.* 15. The particulars of these conspiracies have not reached us. Attilius bore the surname of Tatianus or Attianus; from which we may conjecture that he was connected with Hadrian's guardian, and therefore himself a relative of the late ruler.

³ Capitol. c. 8.

⁴ Capitol. c. 4.

last empty, he replenished it by the sale of the imperial furniture.¹

But the reign of three-and-twenty years on which the pious Antonine was now entering, was not destined to the enjoyment of unruffled tranquillity. The troubled state of the frontiers was a source of constant anxiety and expense; and even within them some elements of disturbance still required the establishments of the empire to be maintained in full vigour. The Jews, so often quelled, and so ruthlessly down-trampled, chafed and murmured, both in Achaia and Egypt; the nomades of the Atlas ventured again to encroach on the zone of cultivation which was only won from the sands by constant labour, and secured by an armed occupation. The Dacians did not quietly resign themselves to the yoke; and the Alani, a name which had recently become formidable, were ever prowling along the bank of the Ister, or in front of Trajan's ramparts, watching an opportunity of bursting into Mœsia. Of the operations conducted against these various enemies no accounts have been transmitted to us. Incessant and harassing as the warfare may have been, it led to no triumphs, and probably to no decisive victories. The mild and peaceful prince, who proclaimed that it was better to save a single citizen than to slay a thousand enemies, followed perhaps the example of his predecessors in purchasing the forbearance of the invaders.² In Britain, however, we learn that the prefect, Lollius Urbicus, after chastising a revolt of the Brigantes, carried his arms beyond the frontier, and completed the defences of Agricola with a continuous rampart of earth from the Clyde to the Forth.³ The Roman occupa-

Threatened disturbances on the frontiers.

The wall of Antoninus between the Clyde and Forth.

¹ Capitol. c. 7.

² This sentiment, it seems, was ascribed to one of the Scipios, but it does not appear on what authority. Capitol. *Anton. P.* 9.: "ut Scipionis sententiam frequentarit, qua ille dicebat, malle se unum civem servare quam mille hostes occidere."

³ The coins of Antoninus bear Imp. II. in the year 139; and this title was

tion was now definitively extended to the upper isthmus, while its outworks were pushed perhaps in some directions still further. The district between the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus was rapidly filled with monuments of southern civilization. The spirit of colonization and enterprise seems, at least in this quarter, to have been as active now as at any previous period. But the reason why, wherever the limits of Roman power extended, the subjects of Rome continually advanced a little further, is to be found in the ardent desire of the provincials to escape from the pressure of their local burdens, without placing themselves beyond reach of assistance, or cutting off the means of a timely retreat.¹

On the whole the historians describe the external policy of Antoninus as singularly successful. The authority of the empire was raised to its highest pitch, and acknowledged by the most distant nations. Rome, under the most peaceful of her princes, imposed a king upon the Lazi, who dwelt beyond the Phasis. She withheld the Parthian sultan from attacking Armenia, by the terror of a proclamation alone, while she refused to restore the celebrated throne captured by Trajan, and so often redemanded.² She determined the quarrels of

Success of the
external policy
of Antoninus.

probably assumed for some successes over the Caledonians. Clinton in ann. He was one of the few emperors down to this period who never celebrated a triumph. Victor, *Ces.* 15.: "nisi forte triumphorum expertem socordiae videatur: quod longe secus est."

¹ The ichnography of the wall of Antoninus is delineated and described in Stuart's *Caledonia Romana*, and the few inscriptions collected. The remains are far less than those of the lower isthmus, and have suffered considerably since the time of Roy's survey. The portion best preserved is about a mile in length near Polwarth, where the rampart has been protected by a plantation. I presume that Falkirk, which stands on the line, is the church on the Pfalz or Pale. There is said to be no vestige of a stone rampart. From the absence of later inscriptions, the defence of the wall seems to have been relinquished at an early period, but coins have been found along it of the date of Diocletian and Constantine.

² Capitol. *Anton. P.* 9. On a medal of Antoninus Pius we find the legend: "Rex Armenis datus," but to the event itself we have no other clue. Another has: "Rex Quadis datus," Smyth, *Roman Medals*, p. 119.

various eastern rulers with their rivals or subjects. She appeased the differences between Greeks and Scythians on the shores of the Cimmerian peninsula, and on the banks of the great Sarmatian rivers. Appian declares that he had seen at this time at Rome the envoys of barbarian tribes, who had offered to place themselves under the yoke of the mighty conquerors, but whose allegiance had been quietly declined.¹ While the counsel of Augustus, not to extend the limits of the empire, sank deeper than ever into the minds of statesmen, the tendency of the vast body to attract smaller bodies to itself was still in force, and required stedfast self-control to resist it. The reign of Antoninus gave rise to more than one signal monument of the size and unity of the empire in its greatest permanent extension. The great work of Claudius Ptolemæus, if founded on the principles of Hipparchus, Eratosthenes, and Marinus, deserved, from its extensive observations and systematic arrangement, to become the standard work on mathematical geography.² The Itinerary, designated by the name of Antoninus, describes the course of the highways, and the distances of every station, from the Wall of Hadrian to the Cataracts of the Nile;³ while the *Periplus* of the Euxine, and that of the Erythræan Sea, ascribed to Arrian, show the relations of Roman commerce and navigation with coasts and colonies even beyond the limits of Roman sovereignty.

The list of the emperors is not wanting in names of men who deserved well of mankind for their benevolence and

¹ Appian, *procem.* c. 7. Comp. Victor, *Epit.* 15.: "quin etiam Indi, Bactriani, Hyreani legatos misere, justitia tanti imperatoris comperta."

² The latitudes and longitudes of Marinus of Tyre were adapted to a plane projection of the earth's surface. Ptolemy applied them to the sphere.

³ The "*Itinerarium Antonini*" may be so called from Antoninus Pius, from his successor Aurelius Antoninus, or from Antoninus Caracalla. The work underwent, no doubt, many revisions at different epochs. That on which our editions are founded seems to have been as late as Diocletian. See *Itiner. Anton.*, ed. Parthey: *præf.* p. vi. The Itinerary of Jerusalem is doubtless a later work, though compiled from ancient sources.

wisdom: we can discern, perhaps, taking a wider view of their policy than was possible for their contemporaries, indications among them of a genuine love of clemency and justice, which their historians have failed to notice. But the consent of antiquity plainly declares that Antoninus was the first, and saving his colleague and successor Aurelius, the only one of them who devoted himself to the task of government with a single view to the happiness of his people. Throughout the meagre notices of his career which alone remain to us, we discover no trace of a selfish thought or passion, none of carelessness or precipitation, none of pride or even of pardonable vanity. Every step, every act, seems to have been weighed by a good heart carefully directed to a definite end. It had been said in praise of Augustus, that he was the *Paterfamilias* of the whole empire: but the head of a Roman family was at best a beneficent despot, standing aloof, in haughty dignity, from the caresses of wife and children, and exacting obedience from their fear rather than their affection; while among his slaves he was a tyrant, self-willed alike in kindness and in cruelty. Antoninus was the father of his subjects in a different sense.¹ The time had come when, both in the state and in the family, the sense of mutual rights and obligations made itself felt. The rule of an Antonine over Romans and provincials, freemen and slaves, could be less unequal and partial than that of an Augustus, both from the nearer approach of all classes to equality, and from the higher elevation of the emperor above all. Formerly it was the highest praise of a just ruler that he controlled the injustice of his officers, and repressed their wanton exactions. Now the procurators of the fiscus could be specially directed to exercise moderation in extorting even their legitimate dues, to spare the needy, to indulge the unfortunate; and they were required to render strict account of their proceedings. Every complaint against the powerful found ready

Paternal government of Antoninus.

¹ Victor, *Epit.* 15.: "quæ incredibili diligentia ad speciem optimi patris familias exsequabatur."

attention. The informers who lived by denouncing defaulters to the treasury, a class whom it had once been necessary to foster, could now be firmly repressed; the revenues were to be collected fairly and openly, or not collected at all. Antoninus took no pleasure in gain derived from the sufferings of his people. The salaries of idle and inefficient officers were reduced, while by allowing good governors to remain many years in their posts, he abated at least the first access of their cupidity.¹ But Antoninus sought to acquaint himself with the condition and resources of all his subjects, and mastered the intricacies of fiscal science, as then understood. His judicious economy might give offence to some who could not appreciate its rare merit, and hence arose perhaps the only invidious epithet that was ever applied to him.² Once for all, on attaining the sovereign power he set a noble example of disinterestedness in surrendering his private fortune to the uses of the state.³

Simple, however, and moderate as Antoninus showed himself in his personal tastes, the splendour of the imperial authority suffered no diminution in his hands. His largesses to the people, and his shows in the circus, fully maintained the scale of magnificence to which they had been raised by the rivalry of previous sovereigns. The secular games with which he celebrated the nine-hundredth anniversary of the city were worthy of the solemn occasion.⁴ Antoninus continued to adorn Rome. To him are due the completion of Hadrian's mausoleum, and the erection of a graceful column, though inferior in height to Trajan's or to that raised afterwards by Aurelius; he is believed to have built also the amphitheatre at Nismes and the aqueduct of the Pont-du-

His munificence, buildings, and legislation.

A. D. 147.

A. U. 900.

¹ Capitol. *Anton.* P. 5.

² Xiphilin (Dion, lxx. 3.) says he was called *κυμνοπριστής*, or pea-splitter (comp. Zonar. xii. 1.), referring, probably, to the raillery of Silenus in Julian's "Cæsars."

³ Capitol. *Anton.* P. 8.

⁴ Victor, *Cæs.* 15.: "celebrato magnifice urbis nongentesimo."

Gard, the noblest monument of Roman grandeur beyond the Alps.¹ He extended and improved the academic system, the most marked characteristic of the Flavian administration, with the feeling, not of a pedant, but of a liberal and accomplished gentleman.² His long and tranquil reign was farther illustrated by the progress of legal science, Antoninus being himself active in dispensing justice, and gathering about him many expert jurisconsults, among whom the names of Ummidius Verus, Salvius Valens, Volusius Montanus, Ulpianus Marcellus, and Javolenus are specially recorded. The contributions of this emperor to the imperial code are known to us in two or three instances only, all marked by their leaning to principles of equity and humanity. In wisdom, in science, and in temper he equally deserved to be designated the Numa of imperial Rome.³ But the great merit of this paternal ruler was the activity with which he interposed for the protection of the Christians. The proclamations he addressed to the Larissæans, the Thessalonians, the Athenians, and to the Greeks generally, are specially mentioned, in which he proclaimed and guarded the indulgence already nominally accorded to the believers by Trajan and Hadrian.⁴

His indulgence
to the Chris-
tians.

¹ A fuller but not a complete list of these structures is given by Capitolinus, c. 8. The column is interesting from the sculpture on the base, which represents the apotheosis of Antoninus and Faustina. The emperor, seated between the wings of his Genius, or his own soul, ascends to heaven, preserving the unruffled composure which distinguished him upon earth.

² Antoninus composed his own harangues, which was not, it seems, the case with all his predecessors. Several of these were still extant at the time of his biographer. Capitol. *Anton. P.* 11.

³ Capitol. *Anton. P.* 2. Victor, *Epit.* 15. Eutrop. *Breviar.* viii. 8. Dion, lxx. 5.: οὗτος ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀντωνίνος ἀριστος ἦν καὶ μάλιστα Νομῶ κατὰ τὸ τῆς ἡγεμονίας ὁμοιότροπον ἀξιος παραβάλλεσθαι, καθάπερ δὴ Ῥωμῖλῳ Τραϊανὸς ὥφθη παραπλήσιος.

⁴ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 13. 26. Dion, lxx. 3. We may perhaps connect these addresses to the Grecian communities with the Jewish disturbances in that quarter. The Jews followed, no doubt, their old habit of attacking the Christians, and throwing the blame of the disorders on them. Antoninus enforced the rule that inquisition should not be made into Christian tenets. Oros.

If we turn to the private character of this estimable ruler, we find it marked with a dignified tenderness which is interesting as a token of the period. The harshness of the Romans in their public transactions, and the rigid sternness with which they acted in political life, are strangely contrasted, throughout their history, with the features of gentleness and kindness which meet us in their private behaviour. But at no period was this contrast more marked than under the early emperors, and no portion of their literature exhibits so many traits of domestic goodness as that which belonged to the age of Nero and Domitian, and embraces the pages of Seneca and the younger Pliny. At last the element of feminine gentleness which underlay the rough exterior of many a Roman warrior, which gleams on the surface in Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, and may be described beneath the rougher lineaments of Lucan and Persius, Quintilian and Juvenal, which lurks under the grim reserve even of Tacitus, and the ill-veiled melancholy of Statius and Martial, ascends the throne of the world in the person of Antonine the Pious. The characteristic of this virtuous prince is cheerfulness. Doubtless he would have been less at ease had he been more of a philosopher. But his happy temperament seems to have exempted him from the painful questionings which beset the men of his time who thought as deeply as they felt. He was content with the policy of his epoch, content with its society, content with its religion; he was satisfied with the present, not anxious about the future; while the goodness of his heart and his natural rectitude withheld him from the selfish indul-

vii. 14.: "Justinus philosophus librum pro Christiana religione compositum Antonino tradidit, benignumque eum erga Christianos fecit." Nevertheless Antoninus was not indifferent, like Hadrian, to the religion of the state. An existing inscription celebrates his regard for the established ceremonial: "optimo maximoque principi, et cum summa benignitate justissimo, ob insignem erga ceremonias publicas curam ac religionem." Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 29. The coins of Antoninus abound in references to the oldest Roman mythology.

gences which leave a sting behind them. He possessed the principles of the Epicurean with the practice of the Stoic; and this union constitutes perhaps the fairest compound that Heathenism could supply. Antoninus was apparently the happiest man of whom heathen history makes mention; and I can well believe that he effected more good than any other.

The attainment of power had wrought a marked change in almost all the earlier Cæsars; in some for the better, but generally for the worse. In Antoninus it made no change at all. Such as he had been, kind, modest and dignified, as a senator, such he continued to be as emperor. He bore himself in all respects towards his inferiors as he had formerly wished his superiors to bear themselves towards him. If he demanded an appointment or other advantage for a friend, he never allowed himself to dispense with the forms of law and custom. With his associates he lived on the same terms as ever. He assembled them at his table, or presented himself at theirs, and rejoiced especially in their company at the genial ceremonies of the vintage. He stooped easily, say his biographers, from the imperial summit to the level of civil life, and cheerfully endured the raillery current in the polite circles of the city.¹ Preceding emperors, indeed, had mixed on equal terms with their nobles; Antoninus was patient with the populace, and treated their ill temper with forbearance. On the occasion of a dearth in the city, the people assailed him with stones; but he only applied himself the more assiduously to supply their wants, and studied to explain to them the measures he had adopted in their behalf. When prefect of Asia, he had once resorted to the splendid dwelling of Polemon the wealthy sophist. The owner was absent. On his return he was offended, such was his arrogance, at the freedom taken by the governor, and insisted on his great but unbidden guest vacating his apartments, and going forth at

Anecdotes of
his mildness
and forbear-
ance in private
life.

¹ Capitol. *Anton. P.* 6.: "imperatorium fastigium ad summan civilitatem deduxit;" and adds, "unde plus crevit." Comp. the anecdote of Omullus, c. 11.

midnight to seek another lodging. Polemon was a favourite with Hadrian, and the emperor, though vexed perhaps at his impertinence, was anxious to protect him after his own death from the consequences of a quarrel with his future sovereign. Accordingly, he inserted in his will a statement that his choice of Antoninus had been actually made at the sophist's suggestion. Antoninus could not be deceived by this advice; nevertheless he acted as if he believed it, and heaped his favours on the fortunate Polemon. When at last the sophist presented himself at Rome, the new emperor commanded that he should be accommodated with lodgings, insisting archly that no one should venture to remove him. An actor complained, soon afterwards, that Polemon, when presiding at the Olympic games, had once driven him off the stage. *At what hour?* demanded Antoninus. *At midday.* *Ah!* replied he, *he expelled me from his house at midnight.*¹

In the absence of public memorials, the whole interest of this epoch must centre in the person and family of the prince.

Domestic life
of Antoninus.

Nor shall we regret to rest for a moment on the character of one so blameless and attractive, and to picture to ourselves the master of the Roman world in the bosom of his private connexions. Antoninus resided, as we have seen, wholly in Rome or his neighbouring villas, of which Lorium on the Etruscan coast, and Lanuvium, his own birthplace, among the Alban hills, seem to have been his favourites. His mode of life was simple and abstemious; his robe was woven by the handmaids of his own consort. But Faustina was unfortunately no Lucretia, and the vices of this licentious woman infused perhaps the only drop of gall in the cup of her husband. Yet Antoninus did not allow himself to resent, or appear even to notice the scandal she

Licentious
character of the
empress Faustina.

brought on an establishment of antique severity.²

Faustina was the sister of Ælius Verus, and had been married to Antoninus before his adoption.

¹ Philost. *Vit. Sophist.* l. 25.

² Capitol. *Anton. P.* 3.: "de hujus uxore multa dicta sunt ob nimiam libertatem et vivendi facilitatem, quæ ille cum animi dolore compressit."

This adoption, indeed, he may have at least partly owed to the affection Hadrian naturally bore to the sister of his lost favourite; and it was the consciousness, perhaps, of this obligation that induced the injured husband to wink at her irregularities. On assuming the purple, he obtained for her the title of Augusta; he gave the name of *Faustinian* to the endowments he made for the support of female orphans; and on her death, which happened in 141, only three years after his accession, he raised a temple in her honour, the remains of which, bearing his own name conjointly with hers, still form a striking object in the Roman forum.¹ Games were celebrated in honour of her apotheosis, and her image was borne among those of the national divinities. The coinage on which her name is perpetuated is still unusually abundant, and is generally marked with devices asserting her eternal godhead. After the decease of his children's mother, Antoninus refrained from introducing another matron into his house on the footing of legitimate marriage, and contented himself, after the fashion of the most discreet and dignified Romans, with the inferior union known to their jurisprudence by the now degraded title of concubinage.²

Her death and
consecration.

A. D. 141.
A. U. 894.

Both the sons of Antoninus and Faustina seem, as has been said, to have died before Hadrian's demise. On their parent's adoption, it had been arranged that his daughter, the younger Faustina, should be betrothed to Commodus Verus, the child whom he was required himself to adopt together with M. Aurelius, while Aurelius was to take in marriage a daughter of the elder Verus. But the younger Verus was but seven years

Marriage of
Antoninus to the
younger Faustina.

¹ The inscription recording the names of the emperor and empress is still legible: "Divo Antonino et Divæ Faustinae ex S. C." Capitol. *Anton.* P. 6.: "tertio anno imperii sui Faustina uxorem perdidit, quæ a senatu consecrata est, delatis circensibus atque templo."

² The regard of Antoninus for the unworthy Faustina is further attested by an expression in a letter to the rhetorician Fronto: "mallem meherecule Gyaris cum illa quam sine illa in Palatio vivere." Fronto. *Epist.* i. 2.

of age, while Aurelius had attained to seventeen. The character of the one was as yet at least undetermined, while the other had already given excellent promise, and was daily advancing in every virtue.¹ Accordingly, Antoninus, making the immature age of Verus his excuse, did not hesitate so far to violate Hadrian's intentions as to give Faustina to Aurelius. The union was solemnized, but not perhaps without some years' interval; for the births from this marriage, of which there were several, date from a somewhat later period.

Meanwhile the young Cæsars grew up to manhood, and the paternal care of Antoninus was not unrewarded with regard to either. Verus was of a light impressible character, easily moulded to good or evil, and though he exhibited none of the qualities demanded of a ruler, he seems at least to have shown as yet no proneness to vice. But Aurelius, on the other hand, fulfilled with advancing years every hope and wish the fondest and wisest of parents could have cherished. He engaged in all the athletic and martial exercises which befitted a youth of family; but his own temper, and still more perhaps some weakness of constitution, and lack of animal spirits, disposed him by preference to study.² To the cares of public admin-

Early years
and promise of
M. Aurelius
Antoninus.

¹ The opinion Hadrian already formed of his simplicity and integrity is marked by the appellation of "Verissimus" instead of Veras, which he playfully bestowed upon him. *Capitol. in M. Anton. Philosoph.* 1. It must be remembered that the young Aurelius bore also the name of Verus. The biographer distinguishes the two Antonines by the titles of "Pius" and "Philosophus." Other writers generally designate the second by his adoptive name of "Aurelius," or by his prænomen "Marcus."

² Both the Cæsars seem to have had similar advantages of education. The names of their numerous teachers are carefully recorded. Of Aurelius it is said: "usus est magistris ad prima elementa Euphranore litatore, et Gemino comædo, musico Androne, eodemque geometra: quibus omnibus, ut disciplinarum auctoribus, plurimum detulit. Usus præterea grammaticis, &c. . . . usus est oratoribus, &c. . . . usus est etiam Commodi magistro . . . usus est et Apollonio Chalcædonio, Stoico philosopho. . . . Audivit et Sextum Chæronensem, Plutarchi nepotem, &c. Studuit et juri audiens, &c. . . . frequentavit et declinatorum scholas," &c. *Capitol. M. Anton. Phil.* 2, 3. Of the teachers of Verus a list nearly as long and various is given. *Ver.* 2.

istration he devoted his patient attention; but his heart was in the libraries of ancient wisdom, or with its best living expositors; for these he reserved the hours borrowed from sleep or recreation; and throughout his father's reign, he never, it is said, was tempted to quit his closet at Rome but for two nights.¹ The time was coming when the pale student of the Palatine would be required to pass his days in the saddle and his nights under canvas, on the wildest frontiers of the empire; but however ill his training might be adapted to harden his frame against fatigue and inclement seasons, the lessons of patience and endurance he learnt from his masters, imbibed by a congenial spirit, sufficed to fortify him in the career to which duty called him. Disposed by his own loving temper to reverence parental authority, he was animated by the approbation of a father whom he could justly admire. When, many years after his accession to complete sovereignty, he reviewed in an address to his conscience, his own principles and conduct, he could refer them with affection and gratitude to that model of all human excellence. Though himself an ardent lover of speculative philosophy, he had wisely sought a practical director in the conduct of affairs, and he seems to acknowledge that the virtues of Antoninus had served him better than even the doctrines of Zeno. After enumerating his special obligations to his ancestors, his friends, and his instructors, for their good advice or precious examples, he concludes with an encomium on his imperial parent, on which, lingering as we fondly do over this brightest type of heathen excellence, we shall willingly dwell yet another moment:—*In my father I noticed mildness of manners and firmness of resolution, contempt of vain glory, industry in business, accessibility to all who had counsel to give on public matters, and care in allowing to every one his due share of consideration. He knew when to relax, as well as when to*

His description
of his adoptive
father.

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 7. It was mentioned as a token of his devotion to philosophy, that he attended the school of the teacher Apollonius even after his elevation to the purple.

labour ; he taught me to forbear from licentious indulgences ; to conduct myself as an equal among equals ; to lay on my friends no burden of servility ; neither changing them capriciously, nor passionately addicting myself to any. From him I learnt to acquiesce in every fortune, and bear myself calmly and serenely ; to exercise foresight in public affairs, and not to be above examining the smallest matters ; to rise superior to vulgar acclamations, and despise vulgar reprehension ; to worship the gods without superstition, and serve mankind without ambition : in all things to be sober and steadfast, not led away by idle novelties ; to be content with little, enjoying in moderation the comforts within my reach, but never repining at their absence. Moreover, from him I learnt to be no sophist, no schoolman, no mere dreaming bookworm ; but apt, active, practical, and a man of the world ; yet, at the same time, to give due honour to true philosophers ; to be neat in person, cheerful in demeanour, regular in exercise, and thus to rid myself of the need of medicine and physicians. Again, to concede without a grudge their preëminence to all who specially excel in legal or any other knowledge ; to act in all things after the usage of our ancestors, yet without pedantry. . . . My father was ever prudent and moderate ; he neither indulged in private buildings, nor in excessive largesses, or extravagant shows to the people. He looked to his duty only, not to the opinion that might be formed of him. He was temperate in the use of baths, modest in dress, indifferent to the beauty of his slaves and furniture. Such, I say, was the whole character of his life and manners : nothing harsh, nothing excessive, nothing rude, nothing which betokened roughness and violence. It might be said of him, as of Socrates, that he could both abstain from and enjoy the things which men in general can neither abstain from at all, nor enjoy without excess.¹

Such is the portrait of this paragon of humanity, drawn

¹ M. Aurel. *Commentariorum*, l. 16. The proper title of the volume, which I thus designate for convenience, and which is sometimes cited as *Meditationes*, or *De vita sua*, is τῶν εἰς εἰρὸν : "an address to himself."

by one who knew him, and drawn, as it appears, without exaggeration. The testimony of Aurelius may well be credited, confirmed as it is by the concurrent voice of Xiphilin, Orosius, Victor, and Capitolinus. These moral excellences were set off by a noble figure and expression: the numerous busts and medals of Antoninus agree in representing him as one of the finest in personal appearance of the whole line of Cæsars.¹ Rome enjoyed the blessing of his administration for the long period of twenty-three years, and at the ripe age of seventy-four he was carried off at Lorium by gastric fever.² Feeling his end approaching, he confirmed in the presence of his chief officers the choice he had made of Aurelius for his successor. To this object of love and hope he recommended the care of his daughter and of the state; then, divesting himself of the ensigns of sovereignty, he commanded the golden image of Fortune, which the emperors set up in their inner chamber, to be transported to the apartment of his designated heir. In the delirium which followed, the good old man was heard to mutter about the welfare of the republic; and in the moments of returning sense which preceded his decease, gave to the tribune of his guard the watchword, *Equanimity*.³

Figure of Antoninus Pius.

His composure in death.

This anecdote indeed may well have been the invention of a later period, so aptly does it correspond not only with the traditional character of the man to whom it is ascribed, but with the temper of the epoch itself, which in the eyes of succeeding generations

The epoch of Antoninus Pius.

¹ Victor, *Epit.* 15.: "vultu sereno et pulcro, procerus membra, decenter validus."

² Antoninus Pius was associated in the empire Feb. 138: he succeeded to Hadrian July 10, 138, and died March 7, 161; accordingly he reigned from the first date twenty-three years and about one month, from the second, twenty-two years and nearly eight months. His age was 74 years, 5 months, 16 days. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* ann. 161; but the statements of our authorities do not exactly correspond with one another.

³ Capitol. *Anton. P.* 12.; *M. Anton. Philos.* 7.

he represented.¹ Equanimity of mind, composure of demeanour, were the distinguishing traits of the good Antoninus; and they seem to have been the result of his well-balanced nature, rather than the product of education and reflection.² As regards the period also which he illustrated by his virtues, there now occurs a pause in the life of the Roman people, from the momentary equilibrium of conflicting forces. The turbulent career of Roman affairs may be likened to the stream beginning as a mountain-torrent in constant uproar and irritation, gradually gaining the compact energy of a river, majestic in its collected force, but ready to boil into fury if impeded by a sudden obstacle, widening at last and deepening into a placid lake, in which the eye can scarce detect the direction of the current. But the mightiest rivers, after expanding into such inland seas, are sometimes again abruptly straitened by encroaching cliffs and ledges, and their languid serenity, so much admired and trusted, proves only the *torrent's stillness ere it dash below*. So it was with the empire of the Cæsars. The reign of the elder Antonine was like the Erie of the great St. Lawrence; and when his successor received the fatal sceptre, the fitful stream was already rushing with resistless though yet unruffled rapidity to the verge of the Niagara, in which its repose and dignity were to be engulfed.³

¹ Thus similar stories of the last words of later emperors, the "laboremus" of Severus, the "militemus" of Pertinax, seem to have a mythic significance.

² Victor, *Cæs.* 15.: "adeo æqualis, probisque moribus, uti plane docuerit, neque jugi pace, ac longo otio absoluta ingenia corrumpi."

The solemnity of his consecration seems to have called forth a genuine enthusiasm. Capitol. *Anton. P.* in fin.: "a senatu divus est appellatus cunctis certatim adniventibus, cum omnes ejus pietatem, clementiam, ingenium, sanctimoniam laudarent."

³ Thus Statius also describes a pause in the career of the "headlong Anio." *Sylv.* i. 3. 20:

"Ipse Anien (miranda fides), infraque superque
Saxeus, hic tumidam rabiem spumosaque ponit
Murmura; ceu placidi veritus turbare Vopisci
Pieriosque dies, et habentes carmina somnos."

To this extreme verge I am about to lead the reader before I commit him to the care of a firmer and more experienced guide, who may teach him to look into the abyss without dismay or dizziness. But before commencing my final chapter I will ask him to pause for a moment with me, and review rapidly the chief elements of political society at this eventful epoch.

Review of the political elements of Roman society at this period.

I. The world could not be governed by the local municipality of an Italian city. Dimly conscious of the necessity of unfolding wider principles, Augustus had invented his abortive scheme for the representation of more remote communities. The failure of this feeble attempt to invigorate the popular assembly was followed by the suppression of the assembly itself under Tiberius. The trifling part henceforth conceded to the people in ratifying the legislation of their rulers hardly deserves consideration. The real value of the urban suffrage had lain in the importance it gave the electors in the eyes of candidates; and for this and the substantial advantages it secured them, the plebeian had accepted the toils and risks of military service. But from the moment when the suffrage was taken from him he declined enlistment. He flung away his sword at the same time that he surrendered his privileges.¹ This voluntary disarming was not displeasing to the emperors. The commons of the city, forming a great national guard under officers of their own election, as in the free state, would have effectually controlled the princeps and the imperator, until at least they had mutually destroyed one another. Unarmed as they now were, they might raise disturbances and seditions, but they could not overthrow governments. We have seen the anxiety with which the emperors provided for their support and amusement, and how they winked at the fac-

1. The populace of the city.

¹ There was a partial review of the comitia under Trajan. Plin. *Paneg.* 63. 77. If his military schemes required him to levy soldiers in the city, he might seek to compensate the citizens by infusing a little more vigour into the old machinery of the Campus Martius.

tions of the theatre and circus, as a vent for popular caprice. Claudius and even the virtuous Antoninus were pelted in the forum, and meekly endured the insult. Nero despised the murmurs of the senate, so long as he could command the acclamations of the mob. Nevertheless we must not suppose that the mass of the citizens at Rome exercised any real political influence. A prince who was firm in the support of the senate or the legions had no cause to fear them. Tiberius, the most cautious of the Cæsars, who had been fain to restore to the people a favourite statue which he had removed from the baths to his own palace, did not hesitate to require the prompt suppression of a tumult, and to reprimand the magistrates who had weakly succumbed to it.¹ Caius, Domitian, and others indulged their moody cruelty towards all classes indiscriminately. Hadrian rebuked the mob with

Contempt into
which they had
fallen.

haughty dignity. The masses of the free population were in fact politically helpless. They were detached from the nobles, their natural leaders, by the habits of mutual independence and distrust which their princes had fostered in both classes. Steeped in slothfulness and poverty they had neither intelligence nor resources. Mingled and confounded with the crowd of enfranchised slaves of foreign origin and ideas, they had lost the traditions of race, which had formerly bound the Roman citizens together, and gave them confidence in one another. Disarmed, disorganized, and untrained, it was impossible for them to act against the moral weight of the wealthy and the noble, still more against the sword and spear of the legionaries and prætorians. They had now ceased altogether to be counted among the political forces of the empire. We may dismiss them henceforth from our consideration.

II. If we now extend our view from the mass of the citizens within the walls of the capital to the much larger mass of citizens beyond them, we shall meet with an object of greater interest, if not of more real political importance. The emperors seem for the

2. The population of the provinces.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* vi. 13. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 19, 6.

most part to have worked deliberately in favour of their foreign subjects, enlarging the sphere of Roman citizenship, and generalizing the principles of Roman jurisprudence. They had not the genius, nor perhaps the wish, to create a new constitution for the empire; but taking the Roman municipality for their model, they contrived by a series of laborious experiments to apply its principles to the inferior races. The freeman of the imperial commonwealth, though long deprived of his legislative and elective privileges, was distinguished from the stranger within the same borders by exemption from certain fiscal burdens, and subjection to a special code of laws. The internal history of the empire, obscure as it is, turns chiefly on the extension of the Roman franchise in the provinces.

Roman citizenship had its drawbacks as well as its advantages. When after a desperate struggle the franchise was conceded to the states of Italy, it was discovered, with surprise, that the boon was after all but little relished, and was in fact wholly declined by large numbers of the people who had just made it the watchword of a sanguinary struggle. The Social War had been really fought for the chiefs of the Italians, not for the people. The leaders of the confederates contended for a share in the emoluments of foreign conquest. They expected that the franchise would raise them to the rank of knights or senators of the conquering state, to the control of her revenues, or the command of her armies. But the mass of their followers submitted blindly to their guidance, and when at last they opened their eyes on the morrow of their victory, were appalled at the prospect of the burdens and obligations which would now fall to their share. The Roman franchise was a severe discipline. The laws and usages under which the child of Quirinus lived from his cradle to his grave, were hardly endurable even by those who were inured to them by life-long habit, and he was glad and anxious to escape from them, even with the sacrifice of conscience and self-respect. Every citizen, in-

Extension of
the Roman
franchise.

Its hardships
and vexations.

deed, so far as he was the occupier of Roman or Quiritary soil, which from henceforth comprehended the whole of Italy, enjoyed exemption from the tribute or rentcharge due to the state as the supreme owner of provincial territory. But on the other hand he became liable not only to the military conscriptions, but to the code of civil law, which, in many respects, as in regard to family and marriage, to contracts, and the transfer of property, was framed in a harsh and formal spirit, revolting to a people trained in a laxer system, or accustomed at least to other ways and notions. Of the laws of the Etruscans and Samnites we know indeed nothing: possibly they were not less severe and stringent than those of Rome; but these nations had at least grown up under them, and their prejudices now rebelled against the artificial customs of the city on the Tiber, which none but Roman patricians could expound to them. The Romans were little disposed to make concessions, and smooth the asperities which repelled their new associates; and accordingly enfranchisement, though ultimately inevitable, was a work of time, and the result of mutual intercourse.

The great experiment of the consolidation of Italy, thus partially successful, was never repeated on a large scale. While the necessities of the state, or the interests of party leaders demanded the admission of entire communities to the

Quiritary proprietorship, embracing exemption from the land-tax, reluctantly given by the emperors.

rights of intermarriage and commerce, with eligibility to the suffrage, which were all comprehended in the boon of the Latin franchise, little disposition was shown to bestow on strangers the full privileges of Quiritary proprietorship, which gave not merely the empty title of the suffrage, but the precious immunity from tribute or land-tax. Accordingly, while Pompeius, Cæsar, Augustus and others extended the Latin rights to many provincial communities, they were careful to give the full Roman qualification to persons only.¹

¹ Such was their general practice. No doubt there were exceptions. Dion, in speaking of Cæsar's proceedings, indicates the different kinds and values of his boons: *ἔδωκε μὲν χώρα καὶ ἀτέλειαν, πολιτείαν τέ τισι, καὶ ἄλλους ἀπο-*

Of such persons, indeed, large numbers were admitted to citizenship by the emperors. The full rights of Rome were conferred on the Transalpine Gauls by Claudius, and the Latin rights on the Spaniards by Vespasian; but it was with much reserve that any portions of territory beyond Italy were enfranchised, and rendered Italic or Quiritary soil, and thus endowed with a special immunity.¹ Thus the state retained a grasp on the land with its fiscal liabilities, while it reaped a distinct fiscal advantage from every personal enfranchisement. Augustus, as we have seen, had ventured to lay a personal tax on the citizens in the shape of a legacy-duty, to counterbalance their immunity from tribute. This tax was no more than a twentieth, and from it direct descendants were exempted. Nevertheless certain peculiarities in Roman society might make such a duty more productive than from modern experience we should expect. The exemptions on the ground of lineal descent would be comparatively few, for the wealthy noble was scandalously averse to the forms of legitimate marriage: it gratified his vanity, moreover, to inscribe on his testament the names of the great people he numbered among his friends. Beset through his declining years by the legacy-hunters, one of the minor pests of the Roman society, he might too often divert his posthumous liberality from his next of kin, or even from his children, if such he had, to mere aliens and strangers. Whatever was the amount of this tax, it had the recommendation of being direct, and easily levied under the strict administration of Roman law; and accordingly the readiness with which the emperors imparted citizenship is explained by their eagerness to grasp this tempting

The legacy duty imposed on personal enfranchisement.

κοις τῶν Ῥωμαίων νομιζεσθαι; xliii. 39. So also in some cases Augustus. Suet. Oct. 47.: "civitates merita erga pop. Rom. allegantes immunitate vel civitate donavit." Vespasian gave the Jus Italicum to Stobi, a town in Macedonia. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* iv. 10. See Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 153.

¹ The origin of the Jus Italicum is ascribed to Augustus by A. Zumpt, followed by Marquardt (Becker's *Röm. Alterth.* iii. 1. 264.). He transplanted the citizens displaced by his veterans to the provinces, and there endowed their territories with the immunities of Italy.

booty. Though strongly opposed in the first instance, we do not find that the legacy-duty caused audible murmurs among the people when they had become accustomed to it. It was counted, however, among Trajan's merits that he relaxed in some degree its stringency. Great numbers had gained their footing as Roman citizens by serving magistracies in the Latin towns; but the Roman rights to which they had attained were still so far incomplete, that they had no power of deriving an untaxed inheritance from their own parents; for their parents still remained under the Latin disabilities. Hence the value of citizenship, thus burdened and circumscribed, was held in question by the Latins.¹ Nerva and Trajan decreed that these *New Citizens*, as they were designated, who thus came, as it was called, *through Latium*, should be put on the same advantageous footing as the old and genuine class. In so doing they made doubtless some sacrifice, though not perhaps an important one, of revenue. The merit of the emperor, however, was esteemed so much the greater, inasmuch as the legacy-duty was paid to the fiscus, and not to the public treasury, and was devoted—such at least was the destination assigned it by Augustus—to the maintenance of the imperial armies.

It was the fiscus, as we see, that gained by the succession tax; but at the same time the *ærarium* lost by the exemption from land tax conferred upon Italic soil. The area to which this immunity was extended cannot be estimated. It seems, however, to have been confined, beyond the Alps, to specific dis-

Constant degradation of the character of Roman citizenship in the provinces.

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 37. Comp. Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 159.: "adeo ut non haberent il jura cognationis, nisi rescriptis ad eam rem a principe seorsim acceptis; sed quando filius succedebat patri, succedebat tanquam extraneus hæres, soluta hæreditatis vicesima. Nerva, amplificato eo jure, matrem in liberorum hæreditate, et viciissim liberos ac filium in parentis bonis ea immunitate perfrui voluit. Trajanus vero id beneficium in tantum auxit ut sicut patris filius, ita in filii hæreditate pater immunis esset: tum ut frater, avus, avia, nepotæ, nepos, et invicem absque diminutione vicesimæ hæredes esse possent; denique exiles hæreditates ad quoscunque hæredes pertinerent, immunes itidem fecit."

tricts appertaining to the colonies, and possibly in a few cases to municipia, and never to have been communicated to a whole province, or indeed to the lands of mere *peregrini*.¹ The places thus endowed were such only as were inhabited by Romans or Latins, by persons, that is, either possessing the full franchise, or enjoying the capacity of acquiring it. But citizenship in the provinces must have been in a state of constant deterioration; for the genuine Roman could not form a legitimate marriage except with a woman of his own political status; and as these must have been few in the provinces compared with the men, unions of disparagement must have been habitually contracted, the offspring of which could not succeed to all their father's privileges. The population of the *colonia* must thus have generally become in two or three generations Romans of a degenerate legal type; though they seem to have still retained, by some explained fiction, the name of citizens, and to have enjoyed some conventional superiority over the *peregrini*.

Accordingly, while the Italic exemption was imparted to none who were not already citizens, and therefore liable, for the most part, to the tax on succession, the citizenship with its attendant taxability was bestowed on many who enjoyed no Italic exemption to set off against it. It became the obvious interest of the government to extend the one, and to limit the other. The earlier emperors had, indeed, exercised a jealous reserve in popularizing the Roman privileges; but from Claudius downwards they seem to have vied with one another in the facility with which they conferred them as a boon, or imposed them as a burden.² The burden indeed

Gradual extension of citizenship to all the free population of the empire.

¹ A few municipia in Spain and elsewhere may probably be enumerated among the *civitatibus juris Italici*. Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 151. 153.

² The practice of purchasing *Civitas* was undoubtedly common under Claudius, and the price was at first high; but afterwards the emperor's freedmen sold it for a trifle to stimulate the demand. Dion, ix. 17. Galba made a great favour of bestowing it. Otho lavished it on the whole nation of the Lingones. Suet. *Galb.* 8. Tac. *Hist.* i. 78.

might be but trifling. Direct succession was exempt from the duty, the smallest successions were relieved from it, and the chance of an ample legacy from a stranger might hardly enter into the calculations of the candidates for citizenship. But, on the other hand, we can hardly comprehend in what the boon could generally consist, except to persons resident in or near to Rome, who might hope to share in the honours and offices, the distributions and largesses, reserved for Roman citizens. When Pliny is reduced to specify respect or love for the commonwealth as the ruling motive of such applications, he would seem to be really screening from view some baser or more worldly inducement.¹ We must presume that the resident in provinces acquired by citizenship some superiority over his fellow-countrymen. But, however this may be, great anxiety seems to have been felt among large classes to obtain enrolment in the ranks of Rome. The solicitations of Pliny to Trajan in the interest of his personal friends and clients, represent doubtless the pressure which was actually exerted on the emperor from every side.² Hadrian was besieged as closely and as constantly as his predecessor. The benefactions of this prince to the provinces are signalized in general terms by Dion; and Spartian assures us that he conferred the Latin right on several communities, while he remitted tribute to others; an indulgence which may perhaps imply the concession of the *Jus Italicum*.³

Decree of Antoninus Caracalla.

Antoninus Pius is also celebrated on medals as a *Multiplier of citizens*; ⁴ but neither Hadrian, as hastily affirmed by St. Chrysostom, nor his next

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 37.: "Inveniebantur tamen quibus tantus amor nominis nostri inesset, ut Romanam civitatem non vicesimæ modo sed etiam affinitatis damno bene compensatam putarent; sed iis maxime debebat gratuito contingere a quibus tam magno æstimabatur."

² Plin. *Epist.* x. 4. and 8. The writer solicits Civitas for his physician Harpocrates, an Egyptian. I presume that had this man been resident at Rome, he would have obtained the franchise under the ancient decree of Julius Cæsar, by which the professors of his and other sciences were thus favoured. Suet, *Jul.* 42.

³ Dion, lxi. 5. Spartian, *Had.* 21.

⁴ Spanheim, *Orbis. Rom.* p. 169., refers to a medal of Antoninus in Goltz's

successor, as has been inferred from a confusion of names, was the author of the decree by which the Roman franchise was finally communicated to all the subjects of the empire.¹ Whatever the progress of enfranchisement may have been, this famous consummation was not effected till fifty years after our present date, by the act of Antoninus Caracalla.²

This gradual approximation of the free races of the empire to a common status was the most marked symptom of progress towards unity. The advances Hadrian made to his subjects by rendering himself accessible to them at their own doors, were answered by a corresponding advance on their part, in the willingness with which they accepted proffers of citizenship, notwithstanding the drawbacks attaching to it. The requirements of the treasury were now working in the same direction in other quarters, to enforce the principles of administrative uniformity. The distinction between the Imperial and Senatorial provinces was still formally maintained; but the emperors assumed more direct power over the provinces of the senate, with a view to assimilate legal procedure and taxation generally throughout the empire. While several communities were still suffered to retain the boon of autonomy, the choice of their own magistrates, and the use of their own internal regulations, the privilege, not less dear to freemen, of self-taxation was, perhaps, wholly withdrawn from them. The new name, which we may render by *controller*, of the officer now appointed by the emperor to over-rule such local administrations, seems to imply new functions, and these undoubtedly related to the levy of tolls and contributions.³

Progress of the empire towards uniformity.

Thesaurus, with the legend "ampliatori civium," and to an inscription, Gruter, ccccviii. 1.

¹ S. Chrysost. in *Act. Apost.* xxv. : ἀπὸ Ἀδριανοῦ φασὶ πάντας εἶναι Ῥωμαίους· τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν οὐχ οὕτως. See Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 162.

² Dion. lxxvii. 9. *Digest.* i. 5, de statu hominum, § 17. Spanheim, *Orbis Rom.* p. 196. The reign of Caracalla dates 211–217. The object of the constitution, it is agreed, was simply fiscal.

³ Pliny speaks of an extraordinary commissioner, "legatus Augusti," who was sent "ad ordinandum statum liberarum civitatum." *Epist.* viii. 24. Comp.

With the assimilation of the subjects' fiscal burdens kept pace the assimilation of the law and procedure by which he was protected or coerced. The civil laws of Rome, like her political institutions, had grown up with the commonwealth itself, and applied from the first in strictness to the mutual relations of citizens only. The laws of the Twelve Tables, the written code of the Republic, defined the rights of the Quirites, the obligations of Quiritary property, and the mode of litigation in regard to them. The *Replies* of the learned patricians, who devoted themselves to expounding the law to their plebeian clients, referred to the interpretation of principles curtly set forth in the written code, and their application to the suits of Romans against Romans; but they must have been soon extended to the solution of questions arising out of the dealings of citizens with sojourners, and even of sojourners with one another. As regarded the tenure of property and modes of succession, the rules of Quiritary possession were clearly inapplicable to provincial estates, and on these subjects, as well as some others, the common sense of the juriconsults was directed to modifying Roman principles, and gradually ventilating more general methods, under the title of the *Jus Gentium*, or Law Universal. Thus for instance the *Patria Potestas*, or rights of fathers over their children, was specially confined to full citizens. The Roman jurists boasted that in no other community were such excessive powers granted to the father as in theirs; but they did not attempt to extend these powers to their subjects. When, therefore, at Rome or in the provinces, questions of parental right in the case of foreigners came before them, they were reduced to look for some other rule of decision either in the recognised law of the applicants' own country, or in default

Pliny's own position at Apamea, x. 92. Under Hadrian Claudius Herodes was *διορθωτής*, "controller," of the free states of Attica. Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 256. The same officer seems to bear elsewhere the title of *λογιστής*, "accountant;" and from this designation we should infer that his functions were chiefly fiscal. See Becker's *Alterthümer* (Marquardt), iii. 1. 67.

of this, in such a law as they could themselves invent and apply in accordance with their own sense of simple justice.

When, however, all Italy became Quiritary soil, and the Italians generally had accepted the status of Roman citizens, fewer cases of conflicting principle would occur in the courts of the city-prætor, and there might have been no incongruity in enforcing there the civil law in all its strictness. But in fact, the

Anomalous relations of the *Jus Civile* and the *Jus Gentium* in the Flavian era.

ideas of the Romans had mellowed with their fortunes, and they had become anxious to soften the harshest features, and expand the narrowest views of their law, after coming in contact with the riper and milder notions of Greeks and Asiatics. Slow and obscure was the process by which the stiff lines of the Decemviral code were rounded into the flowing lineaments of Justinian's Institutes. On the progress which had been made in this direction in the last stage of the republic, when the status of citizen and subject was still strongly defined and contrasted, much light is thrown in the writings of Cicero; but three centuries pass before the sun again rises in the Institutes of Gaius, and then the distinction of citizen and subject has become nearly obliterated.¹ At the period we are now considering, the two conditions were dissolving into one another; but what were the relations of the law of the Roman and the law of the foreigner, or what the character and application of the *Jus Gentium* or universal law, which seems to have moderated between them, we can but faintly conjecture.²

¹ Gaius, however, still retains the former distinction of *cives Romani*, *Latini* and *Dediticii*. *Instit.* i. 8.

² The distinction between the *Jus Civile* and *Jus Gentium* is stated by Gaius near the beginning of the third century. *Instit.* i. 1. 1. (cited in the *Digest*, i. 1. 9.): "omnes populi qui legibus et moribus reguntur, partim suo proprio partim communi omnium hominum jure utuntur. Nam quod quisque populus ipse sibi jus constituit, id ipsius proprium est, vocaturque jus civile, quasi jus proprium ipsius civitatis: quod vero naturalis ratio inter omnes homines constituit, id apud omnes populos peræque custoditur, vocaturque jus gentium, quasi quo jure omnes gentes utuntur. Populos itaque Rom. partim suo proprio, partim communi omnium hominum jure utitur."

The great instrument by which the assimilation of law was conducted was the *Jus Honorarium*, or official edict of the chief judicial magistrates of Rome.¹ Year by year the prætors and ædiles, on commencing their term of office, published the formula by which they proposed to regulate their administration of justice. This edict, originally inscribed on a whited tablet, and suspended in a public place, must have been, in the first instance, a short and simple document, setting forth the recognised sources of the written, with some leading principles of unwritten law and procedure. We may suppose that in later times, when the accumulation of laws, decisions and interpretations had become excessive, the edict directed the reader to the accredited legal experts whom the judge professed to adopt as his guides. In the existing conflict of law and usage, the litigant would require direction as to the course the bench proposed to follow, and the bench would be glad to shelter itself under established precedents and authorities.² While in the city two prætors dispensed the law, the one to the citizens, the other to foreign residents, the prefect in the provinces administered justice to both classes, and hence the Provincial Edict which he promulgated was founded from an early date on a fusion of Roman and foreign principles. We may suppose, indeed, that in the refined communities of the East,

The *Jus Honorarium* and Perpetual Edict of the prætor.

The provincial edict of the prefects.

¹ *Digest.* i. 1. 7. from Papinian: "jus prætorium est quod prætores introduxerunt, adjuvandi vel supplendi vel corrigendi juris civilis gratia, propter utilitatem publicam; quod et honorarium dicitur, ad honorem prætorum sic nominatum." *Comp. Dig.* i. 1. 2. 10.

² The Edict was called "perpetuum," as destined to be in force through the prætor's year of office. Dion, xxxvi. 23. Heinecc. *Antiqu. Rôm. Jurispr.* i. 2. 23. Under Hadrian Salvius Julianus is specified as having compiled (composed) a "perpetual edict." Eutrop. viii. 9. This compilation is referred to by Justinian, and seems to have been sometimes known as the "Edict of Hadrian." The nature of this edict is open to question; there seems, however, no reason to suppose that it constituted a complete or permanent code; nor has Hadrian any claim to be regarded as a great Roman legislator. Hugo, *Hist. Droit. Rom.* § 311. I refer to the French translation.

familiar with the philosophy of jurisprudence, the prefect allowed full weight to the local law, and subjected his own notions, derived from the Roman forum, to considerable modification. Among the ruder populations of the West, however, there would be less occasion for such accommodation, and the magistrate would inflict Quiritary law on the Gauls and Britons in almost all its stringency. In either case the provincial edict would refer, perhaps, solely to the cases which came under the cognisance of the prefect himself.¹

This high officer belonged to the class of Roman nobility, of which every member was supposed to be generally acquainted with legal principles, though he might in few instances have acquired a special legal education. He came to his important post with a multiplicity of functions to perform, and with little or no practical experience of the law which he was required to administer. Under these circumstances he was not expected to act wholly for himself. The prefect having set forth his programme, with the aid, doubtless, of professional advisers, summoned learned assessors to his aid, or appointed judges in each particular case before him. To facilitate the ends of justice, he made a circuit through the chief towns of his province, assembling in each the *conventus* of the district, and selecting from among the delegates persons whom he deemed fit to hear causes in his name. These select judges were not permitted to decline the office; and indeed it was chiefly in order to supply the prefect with such assistance, that the *conventus* was summoned. It appears also that these judges were chosen from Roman citizens or from provincials according as the suitors desired to be ruled by Roman law, or by the special customs of their own province. In important cases the prefect might refer his suitors to the emperor at Rome; and he was assisted by several deputies or substitutes, to whom, at least in private cases, he might remit his

Methods and
principles of
procedure in
the provinces.

¹ See Pliny's letter (*Epist.* x. 74.), where he consults Trajan on a point regarding which he finds that there exists no general law for the empire, nor one for his own province. Trajan makes a special decree for the occasion.

jurisdiction; and these deputies also, being often untrained in legal science, obtained the aid of professional assessors.¹

The jurisdiction of the prefect extended to criminal as well as civil causes. The trial was conducted publicly in the forum of the provincial capital. The judges, who sate by the prefect's side, were chosen from the ranks of the provincials, and these gave to the accused the benefit in some degree of judgment by his own countrymen. There seems to be no mention in the Codes of any courts of first instance but such as were commissioned by the prefect: we can hardly doubt, however, that the police of the villages, the adjudication of small debts and other cases of petty wrong, must have been left to the summary jurisdiction of native authorities, at least in the remoter districts. Beneath the action of Roman courts and procedure there must have long existed a native law and native usage, which only gradually gave way to the extension of Roman machinery.² It must be remembered that our

Relations of
Roman and
native usage.

¹ Sigonius *De jure provinc.* ii., in Græv. *Thesaur.* tom. ii. The great source of our knowledge of these matters in the pre-imperial period is the Verrine orations. I cannot quit this subject without acknowledging the advantage I have derived from Mr. Maine's interesting volume on "Ancient Law," and still more, perhaps, from personal intercourse with him.

² The administration of law in the Roman provinces has been well illustrated from that in British India in some papers in the *Bombay Quarterly Mag.* 1853, attributed to Sir Erskine Perry. Our provinces have been divided into two classes, the Regulation and the Non-Regulation. The latter class comprises generally the latest acquisitions, in which there has been less opportunity for amending the native organization according to British ideas. Here, as under the Roman system, the judicial and executive functions are lodged for the most part in the same hands, subject to the general control of the central government. The judges are not lawyers by profession. They have been trained as fiscal or military officers, and when deputed to sit on the tribunals, they require the aid of assessors, mostly natives, whom, however, they have full authority to overrule. This, it is said, is the system, rude and wrongful as it seems to us, which most recommends itself to the native mind, accustomed as it is to bow to power, and insensible to the principles of scientific jurisprudence. But since attention at home has been called to the duties of a conquering race, we have felt our obligation to give our subjects a better system than their own, and raise

existing documents inform us only of the state of the civil law after the whole empire had been reduced to a homogeneous mass: it may be presumed, however, that the principles of uniformity had gained no such ascendancy in the period which we are now considering. Among the various races which obeyed the imperial sword, various in temper as well as in condition, we may suppose that these principles were variously appreciated; that the Gauls and Germans advanced in them more dubiously and slowly than the Greeks and Asiatics. The intervention of technical forms, and of the class of agents appropriate to them, was resented as a grievance by the subjects of Varus; just as in many parts of India, at this day, the character of judge and ruler is held to be identical, and any attempt to separate their functions is distasteful and liable to misconstruction. The education of the world in the principles of a sound jurisprudence was the most wonderful work of the Roman conquerors. It was complete; it was universal; and in permanence it has far outlasted, at least in its distant results, the duration of the empire itself.

But, unfortunately, education in jurisprudence is not edu-

their intelligence to appreciate it. Accordingly, the greater part of our possessions have been put "for the last sixty or seventy years" under Regulation. The judicial and executive are completely separated. The judges of the Supreme Court are sent out from England, appointed by the Crown, and sit as a court of appeal in the capitals of the Presidencies; beneath them are a distinct class of English judges, dispersed throughout the country stations, trained by practice if not by technical education, to administer an imperfect code of native law, tempered by English principles, and the application of their own good sense; and finally there is a large establishment of native officers, who dispense justice in the native fashion, after the native laws and customs, subject only to appeals to the European courts above them. This system, however, as described ten years ago, is undergoing constant modification, and the impending promulgation of a Code, applying to both natives and Europeans, will complete the analogy between our judicial organization and that of the provinces of the Lower Empire; except that the emperors seem to the last to have withheld from their subjects the boon, indispensable we should deem it, of a Supreme Court independent of the resident executive, and responsible to the sovereign only.

cation in freedom ; generally speaking it is much the reverse.

Decline of public spirit coincident with the perfection of jurisprudence.

The most comprehensive, exact and logical codes, from Justinian downwards, have been the actual badges of national servitude and degradation.

The disgust of the Germans at the niceties of Roman law and procedure was the instinct of freemen, looking to broad practical results, and despising the intellectual attractions of form and harmony. The development of an exact and philosophical jurisprudence in the empire kept pace with the decline of public spirit, and the decay of self-respect and self-assertion. The body-politic became an admirable machine, but life and soul were wanting to it. Such was the languor that was stealing over Roman society at the period of its greatest brilliancy, and its highest culture. Such was the stagnation which, in spite of material and even moral improvement on all sides ; in spite of culminating science, of wide-spread art, of milder manners and expanding humanity ; in spite even of spiritual yearning, was beginning to paralyse the Roman world in the age of the Antonines. The channel, indeed, sloped so gradually, that the direction of the current was hardly perceptible so long as nothing occurred to break and agitate it. But its downward course was made fully apparent on the first political catastrophe. The disasters of the reign of Aurelius, to be presently related, revealed to all observers the weakness of the empire, and showed but too plainly that it possessed no vital power of rebound and recovery.

Meanwhile even the outward uniformity impressed on the Roman world had no effect in creating a nation. The por-

Uniformity without amalgamation.

tions of the mighty structure have been compared to mosaic work. Each province, each district, almost every town was distinct from all the rest, and at first not only distinct but different, like the several pieces of a variegated tessellation, such as adorned the palace of a prince or senator.¹ Ultimately they were reduced to a

¹ Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son Siècle*, i. 567.

single type; they were all of one shape, size and colour, like the flooring of a plebeian cottage; but still they remained separate and distinct one from another. There was uniformity without amalgamation. In an earlier chapter I have shown how the various districts of each province were purposely estranged and kept apart; how the system of local organization worked in making each dependent upon Rome, but all mutually independent. Hence the mass of the emperor's subjects could form no political body to act spontaneously for his interests. They were moved as counters by the hands of a central government, and employed, often blindly and ignorantly, for the creation, or at least for the extortion of material wealth. The producers of the empire were subjected to the control and fiscal manipulation of Roman officials, and these officials were still, as in earlier times, the magnates of the capital, the knights, the nobles, and especially the senators of Rome.

III. The position of the nobility and the senate has been reviewed more than once in this work, at several crises of our history. Let us once more turn our eyes upon it, as it stood in the age of the Flavians and the Antonines, under the fostering care of its imperial patrons. If Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus are the most virtuous, the most able, the most successful of the Cæsars, the secret, as our authorities insinuate, of their eminence lay in the favour in which they held the most august order of the citizens. It is by senators, or by the clients of senators, that our history has been entirely written; it will be interesting to examine what was the real amount of the influence or power thus conferred upon the body which has so warmly acknowledged it.

The old traditions of the free state, which confined to senators the curule and other high magistracies, were still religiously maintained. It was only to the new classes of office, directly attached to the imperial service, such as the prefecture of the city, and command in the prætorium or the palace, that knights

8. The senate and nobility.

Circumstances which gave a show of importance to the senate.

and inferior citizens could be appointed. These posts were indeed lucrative and important, and the nobles deeply grudged the good fortune of the upstarts who obtained them; but they were regarded as emanating from the prince's mere caprice, as pertaining to his personal affairs, as touching closely upon menial service, and the magnates could pretend at least to despise them. The consuls indeed were themselves nominated directly by the emperor:¹ but the consulship was still illustrious for its name and traditions, and not only the consulship which gave name to the year, but the supplemental and honorary distinction which bore the name only, continued to be an object of the highest ambition.² Even the empty badge of the consular ornaments, now lavishly bestowed, was prized and sought for. The prætors, ædiles and quæstors enjoyed a show at least of free election by the senate; and this distinction may have tended to enhance their credit. The enactments regarding the mode of voting at these elections, at one time open, at another secret, show that some real importance attached to them.³ At the beginning of Trajan's reign the practice of open suffrage was in use. Old men in Pliny's time remembered the gravity with which this dignified procedure had been invested, and their testimony, we must suppose, referred to the practice under Claudius or Nero. Each candidate was required to declare the grounds of his pretensions in the face of the senate. He recounted his life and actions, his offices and his honours; his friends were summoned to attest his merits. They spoke briefly, and the

Dignity of the
consulship.
Inferior magis-
trates elected
by the senate.

¹ Trajan, indeed, is said to have remitted these elections to the senate. Plin. *Paneg.* 65.: "Consules fecit quos vos elegeratis."

² The substitution of consuls for a part of the year was an irregularity introduced by the first Cæsar. Augustus adopted and systematized it. It seems that down to the time of Vespasian the term of office was ordinarily six months. From Vespasian to Hadrian it was reduced to four months, and the Antonines limited it to three. This rule is said to have been ascertained by Borghesi, the great epigraphist of San Marino, lately deceased. See Noël des Vergers, *Essai sur M. Aurèle*, p. 36.

³ Plin. *Epist.* iii. 20., iv. 25.

fathers listened with censorial gravity. But in later times this usage had degenerated into a contest of loudness, vehemence and impudence; the claimants trusted more to entreaties than to merit, more doubtless to bribery than to either. Trajan enacted laws to check bribery;¹ but the senate, impatient at the confusion which prevailed in its elections, insisted with one voice on striking at the root of these evils by resorting to the secret ballot, which was recommended by the usage of the republic, and had found patrons among the highest authorities of the free state.² Amid the fierce selfishness, however, of the falling Republic, the ballot had been found intolerable; in the feebler corruption of the Empire some of its minor inconveniences soon called for reprehension. Pliny, who had been among the first to invoke it, was no less prompt to complain of it. The electors inscribed trifling and even ribald jokes on their ballots. The insulted senators had no remedy but to solicit *the prince's anger* against the unknown delinquents. But probably, Pliny adds, the delinquents themselves were among the loudest in pretending indignation. *What can you expect in private life from one who will act so scandalously in a grave matter; who will dare to joke and banter in the senate? The bad man cares not what he does, for, Who will know it? He asks for his ticket, he takes his stylus, he puts down his head, he cares for no man, he has no respect for himself. . . . Our vices are too potent for our remedies.*³ This vehemence is indeed somewhat beyond the occasion, and seems to reflect on the political capacity of the writer who allows himself to indulge in it. The interest of the account lies chiefly in the view it gives us of the importance still attached to the appointment to senatorial offices.

¹ Plin. *Epist.* vi. 19.

² Cicero, in the speech *De Leg. Agrar.* i. 2., had called the ballot, "*vindex tacitæ libertatis.*" This was the sentiment he thought fit to express on a popular occasion; but his philosophical view of the subject was different. See *De Leg.* iii. 6.: "*tabella vitiosum occultabat suffragium.*"

³ Plin. *Epist.* iv. 25.

Yet the consulship was in fact a mere pageant: the prætors and ædiles were simply the ministers of the imperial legislation. But the Augustan division of the provinces between the emperor and the senate still existed. The assignment of the various prefectures was almost the same as that established by the founder of the empire. The senate still governed the interior provinces by proconsuls chosen from its own order. Each of these magistrates was endowed with a competent salary, and extensive patronage, which he distributed among the friends of his own colleagues. These advantages were indeed enjoyed in subjection to the caprice of the emperor, who often interfered to annul the senatorial appointment, to retain a favourite at his post beyond the legitimate period, or events assume for a time the government of the province itself. Nor were the chiefs of the state unwilling to listen to complaints against the senatorial officers. The oppressed might submit their wrongs to the very body from which their oppressors had been selected, and the senate was compelled to hearken to them, and even to assign them the advocates whom they demanded.¹ The Roman people, in the person of their imperial tribune, presided at the trial of extortionate proconsuls, and listened with favour to declamations fashioned on the model of the Verrine orations. Pliny speaks with complacency of his engagement to the provincials of Africa and Bætica, to prosecute the governors from whose tyranny they had suffered, and he quickened the justice of the senatorial tribunal by statements of the violence practised upon Roman citizens. Cæcilius, a consular, one of the delinquents, withdrew himself from judgment by suicide, and Marius Priscus

¹ Plin. *Epist.* ii. 11.; iv. 4.: x. 10. Pliny and Tacitus were appointed (*jussi*) to plead for the Africans, by a *senatus-consultum*. The trial of Marius took place A. D. 100, at the beginning of Trajan's reign. Pliny accused Bæbius Massa in 93, under Domitian. Tac. *Agrie.* 45. On other occasions he appeared for the defence, as in the case of Julius Bassus, and Varenus. *Epist.* vi. 29.

was sentenced to fine and banishment.¹ The fathers were not suffered to regard themselves as above the law ; nor do they seem to have unduly resented the vigour with which even their patrons among the emperors brought the most criminal among them to the bar of public opinion.

Notwithstanding its manifest weakness, however, the senate, dazzled by the splendour of its reputed dignity, continued to cherish the traditions of its ancient power. The feeling which animated it has been preserved in the most glowing pages of the most eloquent of the Romans ; the national imagination, which elsewhere displays itself in various forms of poetical invention, seems at Rome to have brooded on the past glories of the great national council. The senate, in its culminating period, had been an oligarchy of which all the members were equal. The action of each was subjected to conventional rules. Every step, tone, or look in the assembly was governed by the usage of centuries, and by prejudices founded in the national veneration for antiquity. The conscript fathers were trained like soldiers to obey the word of command, delivered by their officers in the tone of persuasion, and they moved from one side of the curia to the other, cheered or voted, in deference to signs understood among them, with a precision which might be envied by the tacticians of a British parliament. The chiefs of factions had well-defined positions ; the prince, the consuls, the tribunes, the consulars all exercised a direct sway within their own sphere, more like the authority of colonels or centurions, than the precarious influence of our greatest party leaders. Hence the senate, whatever personal independence its members might claim, had long been subjected, as a body, to almost

The pride of the senate maintained by its usages and traditions.

¹ Plin. ll. cc. Juvenal, i. 47. ; viii. 25. 120., who, however, insinuates that the victims of these energetic proceedings, like Milo at Massilia, had little reason to bewail their sufferings : " Exul ab octava Marius bibit : et fruitur Dis Iratis ; at tu, viatrix provincia, ploras." Juvenal seems also to indicate the frequency of such accusations at this period ; but the names of Pansa and Natta, which he introduces, are supposed to be fictitious.

despotic command. In tranquil times, when the supremacy of the nobles was uncontested, it might respect as its patron a Scipio or a Catulus ; but in periods of excitement, when its prerogatives were assailed, when the knights were demanding a share in its monopolies, or the provincials clamouring for equal justice, a Sulla or Pompeius was the champion to whom it turned, and it was troubled by no apprehension of the sword under which it placed itself. It might have shrunk indeed from the prospect of this armed sway being indefinitely prolonged ; but Sulla had voluntarily abdicated, Pompeius had consented to exchange his authority in the city for empire in the provinces ; the fortune of the republic, or its own, possibly in the last resort the daggers of tyrannicides, might abridge the date of too protracted a sovereignty.

Such was the senatorial theory of constitutional government ; as such it was understood by Lucan and Tacitus.

The senate
triumphs over
the freedmen.

They asked only, did the existing imperial system correspond with the spirit of this theory ? was the emperor a prince or a tyrant ; the elect of the senate, or a military usurper ? Was he the champion of the nobles in the face of the legions, the people and the provinces ; or was he a mere selfish upstart, using all classes for his own greed or ambition ? In descent, in character, in person, did his preëminence betoken the choice and favour of the Gods ? If such were his claims, the usage of a century and a half might reconcile the sturdiest republicans to the principle of a life-tenure. Augustus had humoured their scruples by the show of periodical resignation and reappointment ; but this farce was not repeated by his successors ; from Vespasian to Antoninus, the best and most honoured of the Cæsars pretended to no such overstrained moderation.¹ Though the chiefs of the state still retained the tribunitian

¹ The emperors who reigned long enough continued to celebrate "Decennalia," and to strike medals, on the conclusion of each tenth year of their principate. Thus we have coins of Antoninus Pius with the legend, "primi decennales ;" others with, "vot. sol. decenn. ii."

power, and counted the years of their reign from the day that they acquired it, the functions it symbolized had lost in the second century all political meaning. The struggle between Rome and Italy, between Italy and the provinces, between the senators and the knights, the struggle for the *Judicia* and the emoluments of office abroad, had all passed away. The senate retained indeed, as we have seen, some political advantages; but it was a senate so often renewed by fresh infusions, so freely percolated by the blood of the lower classes, that the old jealousies had lost their force, and the feuds of the republic had been pacified. Against one class only of their fellow-subjects, the freedmen, especially those of the imperial household, did the senate cherish a grudge; a class small in number, but formidable from its wealth, from its favour with their common master, from its opportunities of intruding into places of trust and power. Against this class it still held a hostile attitude; it assailed it with ridicule, with defiance, with appeals to the prejudices of the people and the fears of the prince; and when it gained at last the prince's ear, there was no claim it so strongly urged, as that his freedmen should be discountenanced and their influence abated. This was the single triumph which the senate obtained from Vespasian and Trajan; and for this it lavished on them its loudest praises, and vowed that the days of equality and liberty had once more returned. The secular contest of the *Patres* and the *Plebs*, of the *Optimates* and the *Tribunes*, finally died away in the disgrace of a score or two of upstart foreigners.¹

Nor must we overlook the merit of the Flavian Cæsars, and especially of Trajan, in the eyes of the senators, as revivers of the old traditions of conquest. The Romans as a nation had gloried in victories and triumphs; but the nobles had lived upon them. The wealth and consideration of the old

The nobles favour the emperors who provide them with conquests and plunder.

¹ Hadrian was the first to employ Roman knights in his private service in the place of freedmen. *Spartian, Hadr.* 22.; and this innovation was gradually formed into a system, and remained in use beyond the time of Constan-

historic houses had depended on their opportunities of command, of plunder, of administrative office. The peace of the empire had reduced the nobles in this respect to the level of private citizens. Hence their deep disgust at the imperial system. They were never tired, never ashamed of flouting the weakness and cowardice of the princes who refused to launch them against the foreigner on the frontier. Vespasian earned their sympathy by his warlike career before he sheathed his sword; and his closing the temple of Janus betokened the cessation of civil rather than of foreign warfare. The extension of the empire in Britain was continued throughout his reign. Domitian added a new province beyond the Solway, and attempted at least to acquire fresh territories on the Danube. The acquisitions of Trajan exalted him in the eyes of his senatorial flatterers to the rank of a Pompeius or a Cæsar. But the old policy of the republic, the policy of the senate in its era of ascendancy, then revived for a season, could not be perpetuated. Hadrian found it necessary, like Augustus, to draw in his outposts, and Hadrian like Augustus in his latter years, or like Tiberius the imitator of Augustus, became an object of pique and discontent to the senators, and suffered in character from their unscrupulous animosity. These passions were at last calmed down in the languid trance of the reign of Antoninus.

The emperor's freedmen had been special objects of jealousy because they intercepted the influence in his counsels which the senate claimed for its own. Augustus had instituted a council or cabinet of fifteen, comprising the consuls and chief functionaries, with whom he prepared his measures, and to whom he partly opened the secrets of his policy. Under the Claudii this intimacy had been doubtless obstructed by the personal interest of Sejanus and Macro, of Pallas and Narcissus. But Domitian, who amidst all his vices retained at least no fa-

The council or cabinet of the emperor; the *Consistorium* and *Auditium*.

tine. Victor, *Epit.* 14.: "officia sane publica et palatina, nec non militiæ, in eam formam statuit, quæ paucis a Constantino immutatis hodie perseverant."

avourite and kept his freedmen in check, the council recovered some portion of its authority: even the burlesque debate of the turbot shows that functions which could be so caricatured were not wholly in abeyance. The council or Consistorium, as it came to be designated, continued to gain in dignity; while other advisers, taken also from the highest nobility, formed, under the name of the Auditorium, a bench of assessors in the emperor's court of justice.¹ Bound to their prince by honours and dotations, assured by his solemn promise that he would allow none of their blood to be shed judicially, favoured by his personal intercourse, distinguished not only by their garb and trappings, but by the sounding title of *Clarissimi*, flattered with the declaration made by Hadrian when he introduced into their order his prætorian prefect, that he could bestow on his choicest friend no higher dignity, the senators did not push their affectation of independence to acts of defiance or rivalry.² The panegyric which Pliny pronounced on Trajan's early promise hazarded the boldest utterances of which they were now capable. On assuming his office as consul

Pliny's panegyric on Trajan.

¹ Marquardt points out that knights and others below the rank of senators were admitted into the council, at least in the time of Hadrian, and affirms, but hardly on sufficient grounds, that the council ceased to be an offshoot of the senate. Comp. Spartian, *Hadr.* 22.: "*causas . . . frequenter audivit, adhibitis consilio consulibus atque prætoribus, et optimis senatoribus.*" c. 8.: "*optimos quosque de senatu in contubernium imperatoris majestatis adscivit . . . erat enim tunc mos ut, quam princeps causas cognosceret et senatores et equites Rom. in consilium vocaret.*" But of these last it is said, c. 18.: "*quos tamen senatus omnis probasset.*" Passages are cited from Dion, lxxx. 1. Herodian, vi. 1. Lamprid. *Alex. Sev.* 15, 16., which show that even at a later period the composition of this cabinet was essentially senatorial.

² Spartian, *Hadr.* 8. The members of the Consistorium received salaries amounting apparently to 60,000 or 100,000 sesterces, — 480*l.* or 800*l.* Orelli, *Inscript.* 2648, cited by Marquardt (Becker's *Alterth.* iii. 2. 87, note 10). The term "*Clarissimi*," as a specific designation of the senators, may have come into use somewhat later; but Pliny (*Epist.* ii. 11.; vi. 29. 33.; *Paneg.* 90.) qualifies the proceedings of the illustrious order as "*claræ*," and its dignity as "*claritas*."

Extent to
which he in-
dulges in free-
dom of speech.

suffect in September 100, the orator, according to custom, addressed the prince in a set speech before the fathers. Such harangues had been hitherto confined to the single topic of thanks for the honour to which the speaker had been raised. But Pliny took a higher flight. Trajan had but recently returned from the provinces. His life had been past mostly in the camps; he had hardly yet confronted the august assembly since his election. The object of the speech is apparently to show the entire harmony which exists between the conduct of the new Cæsar and the vows of his senate.¹ Trajan is presumed to enact the part of the perfect ruler. He fulfils every condition which the best of the Romans would require of the chief to whom they pay willing obedience. He was not designated for adoption by Nerva to gratify an empress. He was chosen from among the citizens as the best and worthiest. He who was to rule over all should be selected from the midst of all. Nor though a genuine imperator, was Trajan made emperor by the army. He was chosen by the chosen of the senate, and with the consent of the senate itself. The orator proceeds to set forth the civil merits of his hero; his moderation, in not multiplying his consulships; his just appreciation of desert in bestowing the fasces a third time on the most distinguished of the senators; his noble indignation against the delators; his abolition of the laws of Majesty; his indulgence to the people, his generosity to the senate and nobles. On the first day of his consulship Trajan had invited the fathers to resume their liberty, to undertake with him the care of the empire, to watch over the public weal, to gird themselves manfully to their task. Such indeed had been the language of other princes also; but none had ventured to take them at their word. It was not so now. *Thee, says Pliny, we follow, without fear, without hesitation. Thou commandest us*

¹ See the summary of the *Panegyricus* in Gierig's edition, *Disputatio*, p. xviii.; or in the work itself, cc. 1-5.; 25-43.; 44-46.; 81-88, &c. It had not been so formerly: "oderat quos nos amaremus, sed et nos quos ille." Plin. *Paneg.* 62.

*to be free : we will be free. Thou requirest us to express our wishes and opinions : we will express them.*¹ Intoxicated by such condescensions, he allows the senate to assume a tone of independence, and almost of condescension also. Though the emperor has stood before the consul seated to take the oath of allegiance to the state; though perfect civil equality has been attained between prince and people; though the magistrates are now free to act as they acted when no emperor existed; though the Gods have been solemnly invoked to preserve the chief of the state as long as he is faithful to his duties, and no longer; nevertheless the senate, he protests, will continue to pay honour where honour is due, and will not risk its security by rudely stretching its acknowledged authority.² The contrast is amusing between the orator's profession of independence and his anxiety not to offend by it; but the senate supplied the best commentary on its spokesman's language by its zeal in protecting the person of the emperor, and anticipating his sentence on every conspirator against him.

IV. Nevertheless the love of raillery and complaining which gained on the Roman character as it lost its self-respect and vigour, might annoy even the most popular princes; and we have seen that both Trajan and Hadrian resided for the most part away from the city, and drew their breath more freely at a distance from the Curia. The rival power which balanced the senate, and divided with it their jealous vigilance, was the Army. Between these forces a certain antagonism had always existed.

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 66.

² Plin. *Paneg.* 44, 64, 68, 93. Comp. Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son Siècle*, i. 17. The consul, speaking solemnly in the name of the senate, repudiates the use of the term "dominus," as applied to the emperor, *Paneg.* 2, and insists on the proper difference between "dominatio" and "principatus," c. 45. But in his official letters the same writer does not hesitate to address Trajan as "dominus." *Epist.* x. 2, 4, 5, &c. So also in the "D. Hadriani Sententiæ et Epistolæ," (*Corp. Juris. Ante-justin.* p. 202. ed. Bœcking) the emperor is constantly addressed by petitioners as "dominus imperator."

4. The prætorians and the army.

The prætorian guard originally a protection to the citizens against the legions.

When Augustus found himself at the head of forty legions, it was difficult to reassure the council which lay helplessly at his mercy. The establishment of a body-guard, to watch over the

prince's safety, and keep peace at the same time in the city, was a concession to these natural apprehensions. The legions were disbanded, or dismissed to the Rhine and Danube, and the prætorians, a small and select brigade, humoured by high pay and many indulgences, took their place under the walls of Rome. The citizen still resumed the toga when he entered the gates, and the armed auxiliary was excluded not from the city only but from the whole of Italy. In the second century the prætorian cohorts were recruited from the peninsula, which thenceforth was exempted from the military conscription. The senate might still flatter itself

Its decline and fall.

that this formidable body was unconnected at least with the regular army; that it was no foreign force, like the legions recruited in the remotest provinces, menacing the rights of the citizens, and freedom of debate: but a genuine militia, chosen from the citizens themselves, in whose feelings it participated, and whose privileges it protected sword in hand. The numbers, favour and consideration of the prætorians continued to advance, till the emperors resorted more frequently to the camps, and made themselves more eminently the chiefs of the army. From that time the importance of the city-guard declined. Trajan paid little regard to this domestic force, and gave no special confidence to its prefects. At a later period Severus, a champion of the legions, both affronted and chastised it. It was finally abolished at the reconstruction of the empire, and the avowed establishment of military government by Constantine.

The regular army continued to occupy its stations generally in the frontier provinces, where it was retained under

The regular army a mercenary body.

the direct control of the emperor. With him rested the appointment of its officers, the distribution of its several corps, and the regulation of its discipline. The transformation of the legions from a national

militia to a paid soldiery, though long consummated in fact, had hardly yet been accepted in principle, and the burdens which might be imposed on every citizen on the ground of natural duty, were repudiated by mercenaries who bargained for their services. Hence the soldiers of Tiberius and Trajan chafed under the harsh restraints of the ancient service, and insisted on their pay, their pensions, their privileges, which they regarded as alleviations of servitude. Every-
 where the officers connived at a relaxation of Relaxation of discipline. their discipline, and the emperors had no harder or more invidious task than to brace it again, when they had become demoralized. It was easier to soothe their mur-
 murs by largesses, and the other *emoluments* of Emoluments of service. the service, which it was the study of Nero and Domitian to invent.¹ The soldier was withdrawn from the ranks of citizenship, taught to regard himself as a member of a separate commonwealth, and invested with all the outward badges of a distinct and favoured class. He was relieved from the restrictions which retained the son of a Roman family under the legal power of his father, and forbade him to devise property by will. The soldier was specially licensed to hold property and to bequeath it, and unmarried and childless as he was, he might enjoy the satisfaction of being caressed by his own parent for the sake of it.² He was removed, moreover, from the jurisdiction of the civil courts; he settled disputes with his comrades before the tribunal of his own offi-

¹ The *præmia militiæ*," besides ornaments and badges, were a pension to veterans, allotments of land, immunity from certain taxes, citizenship in the case of auxiliaries. We possess many specimens of the form of these discharges, or "*tabulæ honestæ missionis*," thus, for instance: "*Ser. Galba imperator . . . veteranis qui militaverunt in leg. i. Adjutr. honestam missionem et civitatem dedit.*" See Marquardt (*Becker's Röm. Alterth.* iii. 2. 432.)

² *Comp. Juv. xvi. 51.:*

"*Solis præterea testandi militibus jus Vivo patre datur.*"

Comp. Inst. ii. 12.: "*quod quidem jus initio tantum militantibus datum est tam auctoritate d. Augusti, quam Nervæ, nec non optimi imperatoris Trajani; postea vero subscriptione d. Hadriani etiam dimissis militia, id est veteranis, concessum.*"

cers, and even the civilian whom he had insulted was obliged to appeal against him to the partial ears of the legatus or centurion.¹ The awe in which these privileges caused him to be held by the quailing provincials, was more valuable perhaps than the privileges themselves. He found that if he had bartered away blood and strength, his elevation in social rank had more than repaid him.

It was fitting that the legion, the instrument by which the empire had been acquired, should continue to exist as one of its most permanent and unvaried institutions. The account already given of it under Augustus and Nero applies in almost every particular to the age of Antoninus. Its arms and accoutrements, its tactics and training, its personal composition, remained as of old. The extension of the provinces required some addition to the number of legions, which, accordingly, we find increased from twenty-five to thirty; but the complement of each, and its due proportion of auxiliaries, was unchanged.²

Permanence of
the constitution
of the legion.

¹ Juvenal, l. c.

² Marquardt (Becker's *Röm. Alterth.* iii. 2. 356.) gives a list of the legions from a column preserved in the Vatican Museum of the date of M. Aurelius. See Gruter, 513. 3.; Orelli, 3368, corrected by Borghesi, which it may be well to subjoin.

3 in Britain: ii. Augusta. vi. Victrix. xx. Valeria Victrix.

2 in Germ. sup.: viii. Aug. xxii. Primigenia.

2 in Germ. inf.: i. Minervia. xxx. Ulpia.

3 in Pannon. sup.: i. Adjutrix. x. Gemina. xiv. Gemina.

1 in Pannon. inf.: ii. Adjutrix.

2 in Mæsia sup.: iv. Flavia. vii. Claudia.

4 in Mæsia inf. and Dacia: i. Italica. v. Macedonica. xi. Claudia. xiii. Gemina.

2 in Cappadocia: xii. Fulminata. xv. Apollinaris.

1 in Phœnice: iii. Gallica.

2 in Syria: iv. Scythica. xvi. Flavia.

2 in Judea: vi. Ferrata. x. Fretensis.

1 in Arabia: iii. Cyrenaica.

1 in Africa: iii. Augusta.

1 in Egypt: ii. Trajana.

1 in Hispania: vii. Gemina.

1 in Noricum: ii. Italica.

1 in Rætia: iii. Italica.

The rule which required apparently the *legatus*, or brigadier, to be a senator, while the tribune, or colonel, was sometimes taken from the knights, seems to indicate a concession to the jealousy of the imperial councillors. The most important innovation we discover relates to the system of *castrametation*, as set forth by Hyginus in the time of Trajan. A comparison of the Polybian and the Hyginian camps shows that the space required by an army at the later era was less than half of that which was allotted at the earlier; and we conclude that the soldiers of the empire chose rather to be crowded into a narrow space than execute the laborious works to which the stricter obedience or harder sinews of the republican militia submitted.¹

The habit of constructing not fortified camps only, as of old, but long lines of entrenchment for permanent defence, of which we have met with such striking instances, has commonly been branded as a symptom of declining courage. Yet the armies of the republic were trained to wield the spade alternately with the pilum, and seem never to have despised the shelter of the mound and fosse. We may remember the earthworks of Cæsar on the banks of the Rhone, and before the Pompeian camp at Petra; and the fortified lines which traversed the heart of Germany were begun by Drusus and Tiberius. In the defensive positions which the Romans now assumed on their own frontiers, they could not dispense with the protection of strong places, at convenient distances, and their connecting these posts with continuous lines was surely no proof of cowardice. The system, indeed, of frontier defences was now carried out more elaborately. The marches

System of military defence—camps, earthworks, castellated forts, and barbarian mercenaries.

¹ See the two systems explained by General Roy, *Mil. Antiq. in Scotland*, p. 186. It appears that the space required for 19,000 men under the Scipios sufficed to accommodate 50,000 under Trajan. The general characteristic of the Hyginian camp is its oblong shape, the Polybian being properly square. But both Hirtius (*Bell. Alex.* 80.) and Vegetius (i. 23.), at an interval of four centuries, tell us that Roman camps were often circular, semicircular, or triangular, according to the requirements of the ground.

of the empire assumed the character of a military occupation. Their garrisons were permanently established; every camp was converted into a castle, enclosed in embattled walls of stone, and furnished with the ordinary conveniences of civil life. The surrounding tracts were assigned to the veterans, or to bands of warlike barbarians invited from beyond the frontiers. Certain battalions were specially exempted from camp-duty, and lodged as a local militia in the neighbouring districts. Bound to appear in arms at the first summons, they enjoyed the use of cattle, slaves and implements, supplied them by the state.¹ The hiring of barbarian mercenaries, which became daily a more important element in the military policy of the empire, had not been unknown to the republic, and was adopted in turn by every emperor.² But undoubtedly the system was carried further under Trajan and his successors than before. Not bands of mercenary warriors only, but tribes and kingdoms were taken into pay. The Marcomanni, the Astingi, the Jazyges learnt side by side with the Romans, the tactics which they could employ, when occasion served, against them. The cupidity of their chiefs was inflamed by the touch of Roman gold; and thus, step by step, was introduced the unworthy policy, fatal as it finally proved, of paying a disguised tribute as the price not only of active defence, but even of abstinence from attack.

In their love of gold, the barbarians might vie with their

¹ Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 54.: "agros vacuos et militum usui sepositos." The veterans settled on these frontier lands were afterwards called "limitanei milites, ripenses, riparienses." *Codex Theod.* vii. 22. 8.; *Cod. Justin.* xi. 59. 3.

² In the course of this history we have remarked on the settlements of Cæsar and Agrippa on the Rhine. So also Tiberius, Dion, liv. 36.; Suet. *Tib.* 9.; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 63. An earlier instance of the kind occurs in Livy, xl. 34. 38. For a later instance, see Vopiscus in *Prob.* 14, 15. M. Antoninus, after succeeding to Pius, made many such settlements in Dacia, Pannonia, Mæsia, and even in Italy. But he desisted from introducing the barbarians within the Alps, in consequence of some disturbances at Ravenna. Dion, lxxi. 11. καὶ αὐτῶν ἐν Παβέυνῃ τινας οἰκοῦντες ἐνεωτέρισαν . . . καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' οὐκέτι ἐς τὴν Ἰταλίαν οὐδένα τῶν βαρβάρων ἐσήγαγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς προσιγμένους ἐξέψκισεν.

more polished patrons, but they could hardly exceed them. The cupidity of the legions was still, as in the more exciting periods of civil war, the principle to which their leaders could most safely appeal. The plunder of an enemy is sweet to every soldiery ; but the Roman retained to the last the national taste for compassing and hoarding petty lucre by thrift and usury, as well as manual labour. The solid coin he received for his military pay was invaluable for investment at a time when even the wealthy lived chiefly on the produce of their farms ; and if the means of investment were not at hand, he committed it as a precious deposit to the soil, often not to be brought to light again before the lapse of many centuries. The donatives, given in sums varying from ten to a hundred pounds of our money, required at every accession, and every anniversary of an accession, might be regarded as a regular advance on the soldier's ordinary pay. These sums, large as they were, might be fairly set off against the expense of constant war on the enemy, or the scandal of plunder and free quarters among the provincials. Let us not grudge the Cæsars the credit of maintaining their legionary hordes with so little injury to their subjects, and on the whole with so little aggression on their neighbours. When compelled to wage war beyond the frontiers, they were nervously solicitous that their wars should be brief as well as triumphant. To gratify the restlessness of the soldiers sometimes might be necessary ; but it was most important not to excite the ambition of the officers. The emperor, and he alone, though long absent from the camps, must be regarded as the chief of the legions, the source of honour, the patron of desert, the tutelary genius whose auspices led to victory. Hence the custom of requiring the soldiers, through all their ranks, to take the military oath at the commencement of every year. In nothing was the contrast more marked between Trajan and Domitian, than in the temper with which each awaited the announcement that this ceremony had been completed. *To the one, says Pliny, the day was happy and serene, which cast over*

The emperors generally anxious to repress the military spirit of the soldiery.

*the other a cloud of anxiety. The bad princes full of restless terror, and underrating even the patience of their subjects, looked out on all sides for the messengers of the public servitude. Did rivers, snows or tempests, retard the tidings, straightway they apprehended the worst that they deserved; they feared everybody without distinction; for bad princes see their own successors in all who are better than themselves, and therefore they have reason to fear everybody. But Trajan's security was disturbed neither by the delay of his messengers, nor by their tidings. He knows that the oath to him is everywhere being taken, for he too has pledged himself by oath to all the citizens.*¹

The balance thus adjusted between the senate, the prætorians, and the legions was precarious and temporary. It was

The emperors become the champions of the army, and the senate is finally overpowered by the soldiers.

in fact a compromise of pretensions and forces which required for its security wisdom and temper in the chief of the state, unreserved surrender of ambition in the nobles, and the continued inactivity of the armies on the frontier. So long indeed as the prince retained his place in the city, the guards who surrounded his person had the power to make or unmake him; but few as they were in number, and subject to his constant care and vigilance, he had, generally, ample means of attaching or controlling them. But circumstances were in progress which compelled him at no distant date to quit the curia and the prætorian camp, and throw himself into the lines on the Rhine and Danube. A preponderating influence was thus given to the army both in the choice of the ruler and the mode of government. The champion of the soldiers became the terror of the senate, which he seldom met but to oppress or chastise it. His own perilous eminence was only retained by pampering the multitude of his masters, either by constant wars, or by plunder and confiscation. Once or twice the senate, maddened by wrongs and insults, ventured to oppose to a baseborn Thracian or Illyrian, in-

¹ Plin. *Paneg.* 68.

vested by the soldiers with the imperial purple, a chief of its own rank, and its own appointment ; but strength was wanting to its pretensions, and the elect of the nobles soon fell before the favourite of the army. Had the empire remained unassailed from without, it is possible that, under a succession of prudent princes, the compromise of the Flavian era might have been maintained indefinitely ; but its wealth was too tempting, the weakness of its inanimate bulk too apparent ; the cupidity and the confidence of the barbarians waxed together ; and the great onset they made on it in the latter years of Aurelius, rendered the decline of the constitutional monarchy into a pure military despotism both inevitable and rapid.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS SOLE EMPEROR.—ASSOCIATION OF VERUS.—DISTURBANCES ABROAD AND CALAMITIES AT HOME.—VERUS CONDUCTS A WAR WITH PARTHIA.—JOINT TRIUMPH OF THE EMPERORS, 166.—ADMINISTRATION OF AURELIUS AT ROME.—INROADS OF THE GERMANS, SCYTHIANS AND SARMATIANS ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER.—PESTILENCE SPREAD THROUGH THE EMPIRE BY THE LEGIONS RETURNING FROM SYRIA.—THE EMPERORS ADVANCE TO AQUILEIA, 167.—THEY CROSS THE ALPS, 168.—RETURN AND DEATH OF VERUS, 169.—AURELIUS ON THE DANUBE.—HIS VICTORY OVER THE QUADI, 174.—HIS DOMESTIC TROUBLES.—UNWORTHINESS OF HIS SON COMMODUS.—LICENTIOUSNESS OF HIS CONSORT FAUSTINA.—REVOLT AND DEATH OF AVIDIUS CASIUS, 175.—AURELIUS IN THE EAST.—HE RETURNS TO ROME AND TRIUMPHS OVER THE SARMATIANS, 176.—REPAIRS AGAIN TO THE DANUBE.—HIS SUCCESSSES OVER THE BARBARIANS, AND DEATH, 180.—COMPARED WITH ALFRED THE GREAT.

SYMPTOMS OF DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE.—1. CONTRACTION OF THE CIRCULATION.—2. DECREASE IN POPULATION.—3. EFFECTS OF VICE, ARISING FROM SLAVERY.—4. EXHAUSTION OF ITALIAN BLOOD, IDEAS, AND PRINCIPLES.—5. EFFECT OF PESTILENCE AND NATURAL DISTURBANCES.—REVIVAL OF SUPERSTITIOUS OBSERVANCES AND PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS.—THE “MEDITATIONS” OF M. AURELIUS.—STOICISM.—NEW PLATONISM.—REVIVAL OF POSITIVE BELIEF.—CHRISTIANITY.—CONCLUSION.—(A. D. 161–180: A. U. 914–933.)

OF all the Cæsars whose names are enshrined in the page of history, or whose features are preserved to us in the repositories of art, one alone seems still to haunt the eternal city in the place and the posture most familiar to him in life. In the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, which crowns the platform of the Campidoglio, imperial Rome lives again.¹ Of all her consecrated

The statue of M. Aurelius on the Campidoglio.

¹ This noble figure of bronze, originally gilded, was extracted from the ruins of the Forum in 1187, and placed before the Lateran palace by Clement III.

sites it is to this that the classical pilgrim should most devoutly repair; this of all the monuments of Roman antiquity most justly challenges his veneration. For in this figure we behold an emperor, of all the line the noblest and the dearest, such as he actually appeared; we realize in one august exemplar the character and image of the rulers of the world. We stand here face to face with a representative of the Scipios and Cæsars, with a model of the heroes of Tacitus and Livy. Our other Romans are effigies of the closet and the museum; this alone is a man of the streets, the forum, and the Capitol. Such special prominence is well reserved, amidst the wreck of ages, for him whom historians combine to honour as the worthiest of the Roman people.

The habits of mind which Aurelius had cultivated during the period of his probation, were little fitted, perhaps, to give him a foresight of the troubles now impending. In presiding on the tribunals, in guiding the deliberations of the senate, in receiving embassies and appointing magistrates, he had shrunk from no fatigue or responsibility; but the distaste he expressed from the first for his political eminence, continued no doubt to the end; his heart was still with his chosen studies, and with the sophists and rhetoricians who aided him in them.¹ Hadrian in mere gaiety of heart, turned the prince into an academician, but it was with genuine reluctance, and under a strong sense of duty, that Aurelius converted the academician into the prince. But the hope that his peculiar training might render him a model to sovereigns, the recol-

Aurelius generously associated Verus with himself in the empire.

under the name of Constantine, a misnomer to which it owes perhaps its preservation. In 1533 it was removed to the Capitol, where it now stands. Its base is supposed to have been recently discovered between the arch of Severus and the milliary column. It may have nearly replaced the equestrian statue of Domitian, to which it seems to have borne a resemblance in the attitude of the rider. See above, Chapter lxii.

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 5.: "ubi se comperit ab Hadriano adoptatum, magis est deterritus quam lætatus . . . cumque ab eo domestici quærerent, cur tristicus in adoptionem regiam transiret? disputavit, quæ mala in se contineret imperium."

lection of the splendid fallacy of Plato, that states would surely flourish, were but their philosophers princes, or were but their princes philosophers, sustained him in his arduous and unwelcome task, and contributed to his success in it.¹ Though little aware, as yet, of the unparalleled demands which the exigency of public affairs would actually make upon his energies, he showed at the moment of his accession that he had completed a conquest over himself. Although, at Hadrian's express direction, the young Verus had been adopted together with him by Antoninus, their parent had resolved, from the first, to treat them on an unequal footing. He had given his own daughter to Aurelius; he had associated him in the government, and bestowed on him his confidence as his destined successor. To Verus he had shown no such special marks of favour. He had scrutinized the child's character, in which no training availed to correct disorders inherited from a weak and dissolute sire; and even when Verus attained to manhood, Antoninus would not suffer him to participate in the duties of sovereignty. He seems to have placed the youth in no public post whatever; but surely a man so good and just would not thus have slighted his ward, had he not been convinced that his faults were incorrigible.² Accordingly, in nominating a successor, he seems to have passed over Verus altogether. But Aurelius had no such confidence in his own superiority. He suffered his affection, at least, to persuade him that he could guide his brother's steps and cover his deficiencies. When the senate hailed him with acclamations as the natural heir and successor to their deceased favourite, he caused all his own honours and offices to be communicated to Verus, giving him the title of Augustus as well as of Cæsar; so that now, for

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 27.: "sententia Platonis semper in ore fuit: florere civitates, si aut philosophi imperarent, aut imperatores philosopharentur." Comp. Plato, *De Republ.* v. 18, referred to by Cicero, *ad Qu. frat.* i. 1. 10. Victor quotes the sentiment as that of the elder Antoninus.

² Capitol. *in Ver. imp.* 3.: "diu autem et privatus fuit, et ea honorificentia caruit qua Marcus ornabatur."

the first time, two Augusti sate together in the purple, and the legends of the coinage celebrated their mutual concord or joint liberality.¹ Aurelius henceforth contented himself with the legitimate prerogative of seniority and the natural ascendancy of a nobler and stronger character; nor did Verus, whose slight and perhaps vicious temper was not devoid of affection, unduly resent the superiority thus gently asserted. The elder emperor assumed, indeed, somewhat of the parental relation towards his younger colleague, betrothed to him his daughter Lucilla, and directed him to bear the adoptive names of Lucius Aurelius Antoninus Verus Commodus. After transacting the requisite ceremonies in the senate, both princes repaired together to the prætorian camp, and obtained the sanction of the soldiers to their installation, with a promise of 20,000 sesterces to each of the guards, and a proportionate largess to the legionaries.

This liberal offer was no doubt promptly redeemed. The treasury was full, and at the critical moment of the transfer of power the chief with money in hand commanded all suffrages.² Already the emperors were troubled with the report of an insurrection of Iberians in Lusitania, and of an irruption of Moors into Spain.³ The Chatti broke into Gaul and Rhætia, counting, perhaps, on the unsteady attitude of the provincial rulers; and in Britain we are assured that the prefect Statius Priscus was offered the purple by his soldiers, and hardly suffered to decline it.⁴ Aurelius, with prudence and moder-

Disturbances
on the fron-
tiers.

¹ Capitol. l. c.: "sibique consortem fecit, cum illi soli senatus detulisset imperium." Eutrop. viii. 5.: "tum primum Rom. resp. duobus . . . paruit; cum usque ad eos singulos semper habuisset Augustos."

² Eutrop. viii. 8, of the elder Antoninus: "ararium opulentum reliquit."

³ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 8. The conduct of Priscus, unnoticed by the earlier historians, is recorded from some other sources by Constantine Porphyrogenitus: ὅτι δ' ἐν Βριταννίᾳ στρατιῶτας Πρίσκον ὑποστράτηγον εἶλοντο αὐτοκράτορα· ὁ δὲ παρητήσατο. Noel des Vergers, *Essai sur M. Aurèle*, p. 29. The successive posts held by Priscus are specified in an inscription found at Rome, which may have been engraved on the base of a statue.

⁴ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 21, 22.

ation, contented himself with recalling his rival, and gave him another command in Syria, where his military talents might be serviceably employed. Calpurnius Agricola, who was sent to replace him, diverted the minds of the legionaries by a well-timed attack on the Caledonians; but his object was perhaps gained when he had led forth his men from their camps, and the total absence of inscriptions of this date on the line of the Antonine wall seems to show that the Roman arms were not now seriously occupied on the frontier of the British province.¹

The commander of the forces in Syria was always formidable to the emperor at Rome, especially at the moment of a new accession. When we hear that on the death of Antoninus war broke out on the eastern frontier, we may guess that the new rulers hoped to anticipate revolt by an aggressive movement. But the mutual jealousy of the Romans and Parthians, ever on the watch to baffle each other in the affairs of Armenia, was ready at all times to burst into a flame; and the last thoughts of Antoninus, embittered by the misconduct of his royal clients, may have been clouded with apprehensions of an outbreak in this quarter, as soon as his own firm hand should be withdrawn.² There was serious prospect of war in the East. It was deemed prudent for one at least of the emperors to assume command there in person, and Aurelius deputed to his colleague the care of this enterprise, in which, with chosen generals at his side, he might gain distinctions, while his frivolity and weakness would be removed at least from the gaze of the citizens. Nor, indeed, was the charge Aurelius retained for himself at home lighter or less important.

¹ Stuart, *Caledonia Römāna*; Noel des Vergers, *Essai sur M. Aurèle*, p. 63. The name of Calpurnius Agricola occurs on the lower wall. Gruter, *Inscript.* 86, 7.; Orell. *Inscript.* iii. 5861.

² Thus Capitolinus reports, in apparent contradiction to other statements, that on his death-bed Antoninus "nihil aliud quam de regibus quibus irascetur locutus est."

Though the eagles had retreated from the Tigris to the Euphrates, the chiefs who had seen how irresistible was their swoop, and how terrible their fury, had not ventured to follow them to their nests, and assail them in their own fastnesses. But the Parthians

Reverses of
Rome in the
East.

seized the moment of a change in the succession for a side blow. Another Vologesus, who had had no personal experience of the Roman valour, revived the claims of his nation over Armenia. The legions were summoned to assert the influence of the empire: but the legions were enervated by long peace and luxury; discipline had been shattered; and neither the soldiers nor their officers were fit to contend against a vigorous foe in a difficult country.¹ The Roman arms met with a series of reverses. Their defeat at Elegia was severe enough to recall the disasters of Charre and the Teutoburg. Severianus, prefect of Cappadocia, deceived by a pretended prophet, was slain, with the total rout of a legion.² Meanwhile, Aurelius had accompanied his colleague into Campania, and there bade him speed on his mission to the East; but Verus had loitered on the way, and was still wasting his time in Apulia, while the authority of the empire was imperilled on the frontiers. Fortunately, Rome still possessed in the East a captain of the ancient stamp. The valour of Avidius Cassius

Succeeded by
splendid vic-
tories.

checked the advance of the victors, and turned the tide of victory. The whole force of the empire was placed at once in his hands. Verus reached the province, but took no active part in the campaigns that followed. The peace which he languidly offered was disdainfully refused.³ While, however, the young prince amused himself at Antioch and Daphne,

¹ Fronto, *Epist.* (ii. 193.), draws a picture of the degeneracy of the Syrian army.

² Lucian, in *Alexandro*, c. 27. The leader of the Parthians is here called Othryades, a mistake for Osroes, or Chosroes. Comp. Lucian, *Quomodo Hist. sit conscrib.* c. 21. Dion, lxxi. 2., describes the Parthians as the assailants. The Romans were defeated, as of old, by the use of the bow.

³ Fronto, however, turns this transaction into a subject of panegyric (ii. 341.):

or fretted at the ribald jokes of the populace, Cassius led his legions once more to the Tigris, took the capitals of the Parthian monarchy, sacked Seleucia, and burnt the royal palace at Ctesiphon.¹ The conquests of Trajan were suddenly recovered; the glory of the Roman arms was vindicated; the confidence of the soldiers was re-established. Statius Priscus, who succeeded to the command in Cappadocia, reoccupied Artaxata. Furius Saturninus, Claudius Fronto, Martius Verus, Julius Marcianus, and Pontius Ælianus, the chiefs of the victorious army, shed a halo of renown over the last splendid successes of the empire.¹

Nor did these gallant warriors want for pens to celebrate their exploits. The excitement caused by this sudden revival of the old Roman prowess seems to have kindled the imagination of the men of letters, and transformed the herd of grammarians, anecdotists and rhetoricians into military historians.² All, however, that we know of their compositions, in which they signalized the renown of Verus and Cassius, is unfortunately confined to the sarcastic criticism of a contemporary satirist. Lucian requires us to believe that the narratives of these pretended Livys and Sallusts were mere clumsy romances, and that the few real facts they recorded were overlaid with fictions, or

These actions
celebrated in
the histories of
the time.

“literas ultro dederat bellum, si vellet, conditionibus poneret. Dum oblatam pacem spernit barbarus, male mulcatus est.”

¹ Dion, l. c. *Capitol. Anton. Phil.* 9. *Ver.* 8. Lucian refers to the severity of this contest, and the great battles fought at Europus and Sura, on the Euphrates. Cassius entered Babylon. The names of five legions, and of detachments from various others, which served in this war, may be recovered from medals and inscriptions. Noel des Vergers, *Essai*, p. 57.

² These names may be traced in various inscriptions, and also in Lucian's satire. The Chinese writers make mention of a pretended Roman embassy, referred to this period, from a chief designated as Antum (Antoninus). Noel des Vergers, p. 58.

³ Lucian, *Quomodo Hist. sit conscrib.* Of this swarm of historians we recover the names of Calpurnianus of Pompeiopolis, of Callimorphus, surgeon to a legion, of Antiochianus, of Demetrius of Sagaleesus, and of Asinius Quadratus. Noel des Vergers, p. 62.

distorted by rhetorical flourishes. The work which Fronto, the preceptor of Verus and Aurelius, consecrated to this interesting subject, has escaped the reflections of Lucian: possibly it was not composed till after the publication of the treatise *On the Art of Writing History*. The introduction alone remains. Its merit is trifling, and may cause us to wonder at the excessive reputation enjoyed in his own day by its author; nor can we doubt that its affected verbiage was devoted to covering all the defects, and enhancing all the merits of the imperial hero. Posterity at least was not deceived by it. The common voice of later writers declared that Verus proved wholly incompetent to direct the affairs over which he nominally presided, while some insinuated that, intoxicated by his lieutenants' successes, he dreamt that he could govern the empire alone, and actually intrigued to overthrow his colleague and patron.¹

After a struggle of five years, Vologesus, driven from his capital and overmatched in every quarter, was compelled to sue for peace. The cession of Mesopotamia was demanded and enforced. Once only during the progress of hostilities had Verus quitted his voluptuous retreat, when he retraced his steps as far as Ephesus to receive his affianced bride, and prevent, as was surmised, the further advance of his father-in-law within his dominions. On the conclusion of peace in 166 he hastened back to Rome, where Aurelius received him with open arms, and threw a veil over his want of personal prowess by conducting a joint triumph with him.² The two emperors assumed the titles of Parthicus, Armeniacus, and Medicus, though Aurelius refused, at first, a share in honours for which he had not personally contended.³ Verus, ashamed

Joint triumph
of Aurelius and
Verus.

A. D. 166.

¹ Fronto, *De Princip. Hist.* (ii. 337.) Verus, in one of his letters, entreats Fronto to write the history of this war, offering to send him the necessary materials. The actual account, as far as our fragments extend, is a curious parallel between Trajan and Verus, in which the palm is openly given to the latter.

² Capitol. *Anton. Phil.* 12.

³ Of these and several triumphal designations Medicus alone, it is said,

perhaps of his own demerits, pressed these honours upon him, and at last overcame his reserve. *Which of the two heroes, asked the courtly Fronto, ought we most to admire?*

It has been said that the cares of empire at home, with which Aurelius specially charged himself, were not less grave than those on the frontier. After attending his colleague into Campania, he had returned to apply all his resources to the relief of the city, which was suffering from inundations and scarcity. Casting aside his books, to which he had little leisure again to apply himself, and bidding farewell to the benches of the rhetoricians, which he had so long frequented, he took the affairs of state and the wisest counsellors of the senate to his bosom. He increased in various ways the employments and the consideration of the illustrious order. The appellate jurisdiction of this supreme court was extended by him, particularly in cases in which the prince's own interests were concerned. Hadrian had superseded the functions of the old municipal officers of Italy, the duumvirs, ædiles, and dictators of Samnium and Etruria, by the appointment of four *juridici* of consular rank.¹ But this institution was again revised by Aurelius, who offered the high and lucrative distinction to a larger class by extending it to prætors also.² Beneath these superior officers was a larger class of curators, who discharged judicial functions in the several burghs of Italy, and these were now to be selected from the whole body of the senators. Aurelius was constant in his attendance in the curia, even when he had no measures of his own to propose. When he had a *Relation* to make to the fathers he would come, even from the distance of a Campanian villa, in person, never occurs in medals or inscriptions, to avoid, perhaps, a possible misinterpretation.

¹ Spartian, *Hadrian*, 19. *Capitol. Anton. Phil.* 11.

² Thus we read in an inscription of C. Cornelius Thrallus, "*juridicus per Flaminiam et Umbriam*," who is praised by the people of Ariminum "*ob eximiam moderationem, et in sterilitate annonæ laboriosam fidem*." From this mention of a scarcity Noel des Vergers (*Essai*, 45.) supposes that the institution may be referred to the first year of Aurelius, a very precarious conclusion.

rather than introduce it by the mouth of his quæstor. Nor did he fail to attend the comitia of the senate, at which the prince's direct appointments were still formally ratified, and which, it seems, were tedious solemnities, often protracted far into the night. Yet he would never quit the assembly before the consul pronounced the venerable formula: *Conscript fathers we no longer detain you.* The respect thus paid it was acknowledged by the gratitude of the body, and a full meed of praise accorded him by his historians. It was taken as a further compliment that when he wished to gratify a friend with the choicest of boons, instead of giving him slaves or ornaments, he conferred on him the rank of senator. None of the virtuous chiefs of Rome showed more *deference* to the senate.¹

The merits of this excellent emperor consisted, however, not so much in the vigour of his own acts, or the breadth and justness of his views, as in the choice of good ministers and able instruments. Amidst the exhaustion and lassitude of the great families at this era of luxurious security, it was not in their ranks that he could find men of shrewdness and energy to repair or sustain the machine of empire. The ministers of Aurelius were chosen from the teachers of his own favourite philosophy; they were accomplished speakers, and at the same time men of sense and practical ability. Such, we may believe, was Junius Rusticus,—*Our friend the prefect*,—as he is addressed by his patron in a rescript of *The divine brothers*, who, after being twice consul, commanded for many years in the city, and is supposed to have passed sentence from his tribunal on Justin, the Christian martyr.² The prefecture of the city, it seems, was now only given to persons who had been twice consul; an ample guarantee, in the eyes of the senators, against the rash and careless favouritism of the earlier Cæ-

His excellent
choice of min-
isters.

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 10, 11.

² Themistius, *Orat.* 13, 17. *Digest.* xlix. 1. 3.: "ex rescripto divorum fratrum," i. e. Aurelius and Verus. *M. Aurel. Comment.* i. 7. *Dion.* lxxi. 35. The martyrdom of Justin is placed between 165 and 168.

sars. Cornelius Fronto, another rhetorician, had attained the consulship as far back as the reign of Hadrian, but declined office in the provinces. He continued in his old age to attend and advise his imperial pupil, who treated him with the highest consideration.¹ The names, moreover, of Salvius Julianus, the Jurist, of Helvius Pertinax, himself afterwards a virtuous but unfortunate emperor, of Catilius Severus, Valerius Asiaticus, Martius Verus, and other persons of high public character, are recorded in the list of prefects, as men on whom Aurelius justly bestowed his esteem and confidence.²

During the last years of the Parthian expedition, the government had been disquieted by despatches from both the Upper and Lower Danube, announcing repeated inroads of the barbarians along the whole course of the river. Aurelius felt that Rome was not strong enough, at least at the moment, to wage two great wars simultaneously. He had directed his officers to connive, to bribe, to temporize, till the renewal of peace in the East should leave a numerous army of veterans free for other service. The honours with which the emperors were greeted, the triumph they celebrated, the victories they proclaimed on the return of Verus, disguised to the populace the deep anxiety of their statesmen, who seem to have been struck now suddenly, and for the first time, by apprehensions of decline at the centre of the empire, and of increase of power in its assailants on the frontiers. Aurelius was evidently much depressed; Verus continued careless and insensible as ever. The younger Cæsar flung himself into the dissipations of his villa on

Inroads of the
barbarians
along the whole
Danubian fron-
tier.

Apprehensions
of Aurelius.
Supineness of
Verus.

¹ The discovery of the remains of Fronto, consisting of a large number of letters between him and his pupils Aurelius and Verus, together with a sketch of contemporary history, *Principia historie*, and some miscellaneous fragments, has lowered rather than raised the reputation of the man who in his own day was considered a second Cicero. His history is a vapid panegyric, his letters idle prattle. He was, perhaps, very old at the time of writing them; but at best they cast a fatal shade over the literary character of the age.

² Noel des Vergers, *Essai*, &c., p. 54., from Borghesi's recent investigations among the inscriptions.

the Clodian Way, and among his boon companions paraded the trophies of his campaigns, his troops of buffoons and players, dancers and conjurors, and all the vilest spawn of the Orontes.¹

But these obnoxious instruments of dissipation were not the most fatal gift the East had now conferred upon her conquerors. The army of Syria, which accompanied Verus into Italy, was deeply infected with the germs of a strange and deadly pestilence, contracted in the marshes or sands of Mesopotamia. In every town it traversed it disseminated the infection.² In Rome, the number of victims amounted to many thousands. The virulence of the disease was no doubt increased by the long-continued scarcity, and the general misery of the people. Superstitious fears demanded a crime and a victim. The crime was discovered in the treachery employed, as it was averred, by Avidius Cassius, in the sack of Seleucia; and thence, according to report, the seeds of plague were scattered far and wide on the opening of a coffer in the temple of Apollo.³ Cassius, indeed, was too powerful to be sacrificed to a popular outcry. We may conjecture, however, that the fierce hostility to the Christians which now suddenly blazed forth was due to these panic alarms. Not among the Christians only, but through the ranks of Pagan

Pestilence spread throughout the empire by the army returning from the East.

¹ Capitolinus (*Ver.* 4.) compares the vices of Verus to the mad freaks of Caius, the low buffoonery of Nero, and the tasteless gluttony of Vitellius: "amavit et aurigas, prasino favens. Gladiatorum etiam frequentius pugnas in convivio habuit." Aurelius groaned over dissipation which he deemed extravagant and vicious: "post convivium lusum est tesseris usque ad lucem."

² Capitol. *Ver.* 8.: "fuit ejus fati ut in eas provincias, per quas rediit, Roman usque, luem secum deferre videretur."

³ Capitol. l. c.: "nata fertur pestilentia in Babylonia, ubi de templo Apollinis ex arcula aurea, quam miles forte inciderat, spiritus pestilens evasis, atque inde Parthos orbemque complens." The statement is repeated by Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 6. 24., with the variation that the effluvium proceeded from a narrow chink or crevice in the temples. The fatal effects of subterranean gases were often the subject of wondering remark to the ancients. See Apul. *de mundo*, p. 729., and the commentators on Amm. Marcell. *in loc.*

society also, prophecies of the world's impending conflagration were boldly advanced, and eagerly credited. Misery and terror, terror and imposture, went as usual hand in hand. Pretenders trifled with the popular agony for gain or notoriety. One man asserted that the secular fire would descend at the moment when, casting himself from a tree in the Campus Martius, he should be seen transformed into a stork. He leapt from the tree, and let a stork fly from his bosom; but the trick was discovered, and forgiven, with a pensive sigh, by the gentle Aurelius.¹ The emperor's philosophical tenets, however inconsistent with a genuine belief, recommended a reverential observance of established cults; and the enthusiasm of so tender a spirit was itself akin to superstition. He was fain to invoke in aid of the commonwealth all the rites and formulas of pagan religion. He summoned to Rome the ministers of every deity, foreign as well as national, performed a solemn lustration of the city, and delayed his departure for the war till he had celebrated a lectisternium seven days successively.² Meanwhile, the bodies of the dead were too numerous to be tended with the usual ceremonies. Carts and waggons were employed to convey them to their place of sepulture. Not the vulgar herd of the Suburra only, the usual victims of a pestilence, were stricken, but many of the highest rank also suffered. Aurelius marked the national character of the calamity by according to small as well as great the melancholy tribute of a public burial. The plague

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 13.

² The sacrifices which Aurelius made on this occasion were remembered two centuries later; and when Julian offered similar propitiations to the national divinities before engaging in his Parthian expedition, he was reminded of the epigram current in the days of his predecessor. Cf. Ammian. Marc. xxv. 4.:

οἱ βόες οἱ λευκοὶ Μάρκῳ τῷ Καίσαρι χαίρειν·
 ἂν δὲ σὺ νικήσης ἁμμὲς ἀπωλόμεθα.

But the same venerable jest had already been applied to Augustus. Senec. *de benefic.* iii. 27.: "Rufus, vir ordinis senatorii, inter cœnam optaverat, ne Cæsar salvus rediret ex peregrinatione quam parabat; et adjecerat, idem omnes et tauros et vitulos optare."

diverged in every direction from the line along which it had been carried. It spread from east to west, to the right and to the left, with such virulence, that one writer, at least, has ventured to affirm that more than half the population, and almost all the soldiers, perished.¹ Orosius may be credited in his fearful account of this visitation, though, with the natural feeling of his co-religionists, he ascribes it to the persecution of the Christians, which he says had already broken out in Asia and Gaul.² The plague, he says, extended through many provinces, and so devastated the whole of Italy, that villas, towns, and lands were everywhere left without inhabitant or cultivator, and fell to ruin, or relapsed into wildernesses. It is affirmed, too, he adds, as if from accredited records, that the legions in their winter quarters were so reduced that it was impossible to wage the Marcomannic war without raising a new army, which detained Aurelius three years at Carnuntum.³

It was in 167, in the depth of this sore affliction, that the emperors went forth together; for Aurelius scrupled either to send Verus to the war without him, or to leave him in the city. The legions followed, Campaign of
167. drooping with sickness and despondency; reports from the scene of warfare were terrific. The audacity of the assailants, their numbers and organization, the alarm of the provincials, the falling in of the outposts, and defeat of frontier cohorts, combined to show that the crisis was of no common kind, and would task all the energies of the state, all the en-

¹ Eutrop. viii. 12.: "ut Romæ ac per Italiam provinciasque maxima hominum pars, militum omnes fere copię languore defecerint." Ammian. Marcell. l. c.: "ab ipsis Persarum finibus adusque Rhenum et Gallias."

² Oros. vii. 15.: "secuta est lues." Unfortunately, we cannot determine the year of the martyrdom of Justin, which Tillémont puts in 168, two years after the breaking out of the pestilence. Clinton, however, assigns the martyrdom of Polycarp to 166. Greswell, *Suppl. Dissertations*, p. 247, foll. to 164

³ Oros. l. c.: "delectu militum quem triennio jugiter apud Carnuntum M. Antoninus habuit."

The emperors
advance to
Aquileia.

ergies of its rulers.¹ But Aurelius was as yet untried in war: to his subjects he was known at best as a laborious administrator of domestic affairs; while Verus had only shown himself abroad to earn general contempt. The citizens were not reassured by their departure; and it was hardly to be expected that the barbarians would be terrified by their arrival. But the name of Emperor still commanded the respect of the nations. When the emperors reached Aquileia, they heard that the Marcomanni had already recrossed the Danube, and the Quadi, who had lately lost their own king, offered to accept a ruler from the Romans. Verus, flushed with this first success, and already weary of a campaign which placed him under the eye of an austere colleague, proposed at once to return; but Aurelius, assuming the rights of an elder and superior, forbade him to leave the camp.² The retreat, however, of the barbarians, allowed both the brothers to retrace their steps before the winter, and in the absence of all notes of time in our brief and meagre histories, the legend of a medal, and the casual notice of a statute, may serve to show that Aurelius was in Rome at the end of 167, and the beginning of the following year.

Meanwhile every effort was made to recruit the legions, to reinforce the garrisons, to collect arms and munitions of war. With the return of the military season, the emperors exchanged the toga for the sagum, and once more revisited their camps. But their levies were not yet completed, the heart of the empire was stricken with languor, and its limbs shook and withered. It was necessary to enrol the slaves for service, as in the crisis of the Punic invasion, and after the overthrow of Verus.³ The mustering of the forces at Aquileia served to concentrate the fatal sick-

¹ The Quadi and Marcomanni, it seems, had penetrated into Italy, had sacked Opitergium, and even laid siege to Aquileia. Ammian. Marcell. xxix. 6.

² Capit. *M. Anton. Phil.* 14.

³ Capit. *M. Anton. Phil.* 21.

ness which had abated none of its virulence, and with which the skill of Galen, the great physician, who was summoned to head-quarters, was unable to contend.¹ The emperors, indeed, now crossed the Julian Alps, The emperors cross the Alps. and presented themselves in Illyricum, where they provided for the defence of Italy, instead of striking at the advancing power of the enemy. Again Verus urged his colleague to return. Baffled by a foe more invincible than the barbarians, they again suspended their operations, and retraced their steps. They journeyed amicably in the same litter, the elder still striving to screen the weaknesses of the younger; but the days of Verus were already numbered; shattered by fatigue and anxiety, if not by dissipation, he fell sick on the road, and expired at Return and death of Verus. Altinum in Venetia.²

The decease of an unworthy associate was a relief to the survivor. Aurelius could bear his own troubles more easily when no longer required to urge a reluctant colleague, whom he would not abandon to contempt. He desired the senate to decree a consecration; nevertheless, he did not fail to assure it that the victories over the Parthians had been gained by his own politic dispositions, not by the skill or courage of the stripling whom he proposed to deify. But the perils of the state now impressed him more deeply than ever. His gentle nature was harrowed by the misery around him, inflicted by a Power with which it seemed even impious to contend. The weight of empire was too heavy a burden for the sensitive student; yet of all the Romans, none bore it more manfully. He

A. D. 169.
A. U. 922.

¹ Galen was specially charged with the care of Commodus, the young son of Aurelius (born A. D. 161), with whom he soon left the camp for Rome, and there occupied himself in the composition of his voluminous medical treatises.

² Capitol. l. c. *Ver.* 9. *M. Anton. Phil.* 14.: "Lucius apoplexia correptus periit." This writer rejects, with honest indignation, the fable that Aurelius caused his brother to be poisoned: "nemo est principum quem non gravis fama perstringat. . . . nota est fabula quam Marci non capit vita sed hoc nefas est de Marco putari totam purgatam confutatamque respimus."

plunged into the struggle with the barbarians as a refuge from graver apprehensions; yet when he could steal an hour from affairs for study or meditation, he still patiently reviewed the dogmas of philosophy, or examined his own heart and conscience by abstract and eternal principles. The contest with the assailants was long and dubious. It is represented as a simultaneous, and even a combined attack, of all the races on the northern frontier, who may be ranged under the three national divisions of Germans, Scythians, and Sarmatians; though we may question the fact of an actual league among tribes so many, so various, and so distant.¹

Aurelius seems to have mustered his legions at Carnuntum, the centre of the menaced line of defence, but his hand was long restrained by the weakness of his forces. Nor, with all his devotion to duty, did this gallant prince possess the vigour or the genius of a great commander.² He cast himself on the advice of his officers, and even of his nobles, and was wont to pretend that it better became him to follow the counsel of many, than to compel all to submit to his sole direction.³ This indulgence they seem to have repaid by complaining of his severity, and carping at his studies; but the war with the Marcomanni cost the lives of many of their number, and the Ulpian Forum was crowded with statues erected in their

M. Aurelius on
the Danube.

A. D. 174.
A. U. 927.

¹ From Dion, lxxi. 12., and Capitolinus, *M. Anton. Phil.* 22., we get the names of the Marcomanni, Quadi, Narisci, and Hermunduri (German); the Latringi, Buri, Jazyges, Astingi, Cotini, Dancrigi (Sarmatian); the Victovales, Sosibes, Sicobates, Roxolani, Bastarnæ, Peucini, Alani, and Costoboci (Scythian). See Greenwood, *Hist. of the Germans*, i. 176., who remarks on the improbability of these nations having formed a common confederacy.

² Aurelius speaks disparagingly of his own natural genius: this may be modesty, but it agrees with the idea I form of him. *Comment.* v. 5.: *δριμύτητά σου ὄχ' ἔχονσι θαυμάσαι. ἔστω ἄλλὰ ἕτερα πολλὰ, ἐφ' ὧν οὐκ ἔχεις εἰπεῖν, οὐ γὰρ πέφυκα. ἑκείνα δὲν παρήχον.*

³ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 22. Avidius Cassius complained of his neglecting the empire for his books: "M. Antoninus philosophatur, et querit de clementia, et de animis, et de honesto et justo; nec sentit pro republica." Vulfatius Gallicanus, in *Avul. Cass.* 14.

honour by their master.¹ Even through the winter were the Romans compelled to confront a foe, who chose the season of frost and ice for his inroads. They fought more than once on the bosom of the frozen Danube, when they could only keep their footing by placing their shields beneath them.² At other times the campaign was carried on during the greatest heats of summer. The Quadi surrounded and reduced them to straits by cutting off their supply of water. A sudden storm, which filled the Roman camp with a seasonable rainfall, while the enemy was disordered by violent lightnings, was regarded as miraculous, and ascribed to the incantations of an Egyptian magician, to the prayers of a legion of Christians, or to the favour of Jove towards the best of mortals, according to the various prejudices of different observers.³ The question itself would hardly be worth an allusion, but for the pertinacity with which it was once debated, and the import-

Remarkable
victory over
the Quadi.

A. D. 174.

¹ Capitol. l. c. The barbarians seem to have penetrated into the provinces in various quarters. Pertinax, afterwards emperor, succeeded in driving them out of Rætia and Noricum. Capitol. *Pertin.* 2. Dion, lxxi. 3. The presence of a great number of legions along the Danubian frontier is attested by inscriptions. Noel des Vergers, *Essai*, see p. 77, foll.

² Dion, lxxi. 7.

³ See the account of the event as given by Dion, with the criticism of the Christian Xiphilinus; and compare the famous lines of Claudian: "Chaldræa vago seu carmina ritu Armavere Deos, seu, quod reor, omne Tonantis Obsequium Marci mores potuere mereri." xxviii. 349. Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 24.: "fulmen de cælo precibus suis contra hostium machinamentum extorsit, suis pluvia impetrata." Tertullian, from whom the church-writers seem to have taken the idea of a Christian miracle, declares that letters of Aurelius to that effect were in existence. *Apolog.* 5. (cf. *ad Scap.* 4.). Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 5., says merely λόγος ἔχει. Orosius, vii. 15.: "exstare dicuntur." Eusebius refers to a certain Apollinaris for the statement that the emperor gave to the legion the name of "Fulminata," in attestation of the Christian miracle; but it is enough to say that there was a legion already so called under Trajan. Of recent writers Mr. Fynes Clinton has given a full collection of the authorities. (Appendix to *Fast. Rom.* p. 24.) Professor Blunt, of Cambridge, the latest defender of Patristic miracles, has abandoned this one, which will hardly be maintained after his rejection, by any English Protestant divine. See *Lectures on the Hist. of the Church*, p. 295.

ance even recently assigned to it. But, however insignificant the discussion may now appear, an interest will still attach to the event, as long as the sculptures on the column of Aurelius, which still adorns the principal avenue of modern Rome, presents to us the figure of the Olympian Jupiter casting from the open heavens his beneficent rain-flood, and his appalling thunderbolts.

But the victory thus signally gained was chequered by many reverses. The arms of Rome, however successful in the field, were impeded by the climate and the soil, by the wide spaces to be traversed, and the ubiquity of the enemy. Aurelius was retained in the north through several summers; the treaties he made with his adversaries were repeatedly broken by them again, and the peace which was to secure him a triumph slipped constantly from his hand. To the public troubles which encompassed him were added domestic calamities. Of the two sons, in whom he might hope to find a comfort and support in his old age, a blessing to which none of his predecessors could look since Vespasian, Annian, the elder, fell sick in early youth, and died after a long decline; Commodus, the younger, though placed under the charge of the sage and gentle Fronto, displayed, from the first, an evil nature. A daughter named Faustina died also in opening girlhood. The father's tenderness for his children is attested in a letter to Fronto, which agreeably delineates his amiable character.¹ His regard for their mother was tender even to weakness, if at least she was as unworthy of a husband's confidence as some historians have represented her; yet even from his most intimate friend he disguised his vexation at the proofs he received of her infidelity. Her guilt, indeed, he is said to have acknowledged and deplored; but he refused to dismiss her, pleading, as was reported in excuse, that if he divorced his wife he ought also to surrender the empire

Troubles of Aurelius, domestic as well as public.

Premature deaths of his children.

Evil nature of Commodus.

Infidelity of Faustina.

¹ Fronton. *Epist.* (i. p. 258, 259.)

her dowry.¹ Even at the commencement of their union, while Aurelius was occupied with affairs at Rome, or plunged in his studies in the recesses of the palace, Faustina, in the voluptuous villas of Campania, rejected the restraints of matronhood with flagrant indecency.² Such is the account which has received general credence; but allowance must be made for the ribaldry of contemporary anecdote, and for the hatred of the next generation towards the mother of the tyrant Commodus. The insinuation that this son was the base born child of a gladiator, suggested, perhaps, by his passion for the shows of the arena, is belied by Fronto's warm assertion of his likeness to Aurelius, and by the testimony of existing coins which strikingly confirms it.

Nor can we affirm with confidence another charge against Faustina, of still graver public importance. The health of Aurelius caused her much anxiety; for Commodus was frivolous and inexperienced, and among the military chiefs now rising to eminence, she saw perhaps more than one who might snatch at the purple on his decease. Aurelius was not perhaps originally sickly; in his youth he had enjoyed all martial and athletic exercises; but his devotion to study, according to Dion, had early weakened his health, and the fatigue and cares of his painful position may have aggravated every morbid symptom. Faustina had accompanied her husband during his campaigns. After the rout of the Quadi, when the Army selected him as Imperator, they proclaimed her *Mother of the Camps*.³ She was on the spot, and from personal observations she was convinced that he had not long to live. She addressed herself, so it was asserted, to Avidius Cassius, assured him that the throne would presently be vacant, and incited him to as-

Treason of
Avidius Cas-
sius.

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 19.: "dixisse fertur, si uxorem dimittimus, redamus et dotem." Comp. 3. 29. It should be observed that no such charges are brought against Faustina by Dion.

² Fronto. *Epist.* (ii. p. 52, 54.): "tam simili facie ut nihil sit hoc simili similis."

³ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 26. Dion, lxxi. 10.

sume the purple at the head of his legions, with the promise of her support, and the offer of her hand.¹ She hoped thus to preserve her own position, and secure a throne, at least in reversion, for her son. Cassius, a descendant of the tyrannicide, professed hereditary hatred to tyrants, and was wont to lament that the republic could not be rid of one Emperor but by the hand of another.² Even in his youth he had harboured the idea of overthrowing the elder Antoninus, but his impetuosity had been checked and disguised by a prudent and loyal father. Verus had conceived just fears of his ambition, and had warned Aurelius against him. Aurelius had replied, in the tone of stoical fatalism, that *no prince ever killed his successor*, and had added, repeating the sentiment of Hadrian, *How wretched is the lot of rulers, whose fears of treason are never credited till they have fallen by it!*³ He refused to adopt any precautions, and was content to leave the Syrian prefecture in the hands of one whom he knew to be brave and able, and a bulwark of the ancient discipline; one who, in a luxurious age and a voluptuous capital, affected the character of a Marius, and put to death without mercy the officer who, without orders to fight, had gained him a victory; who finally had quelled a mutiny by throwing himself unarmed into the ranks, and inviting the soldiers

¹ Dion, lxxi. 22. Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 24.: "ut quidam volunt." Vulcatius Gallicanus, *Avid. Cass.* 7.: "ut quidam dicunt." It is admitted that, according to another rumour, this story was a pretence of Cassius, to persuade his soldiers that he had certain information of the emperor's death. Gallicanus tells us that he takes the account from the history of Marius Maximus, but expressly says that he does not believe in the alleged guilt of Faustina. The reason, indeed, which he gives, that her letters exist, in which she urged her husband to punish the rebellion with severity, is not very conclusive. See cc. 9, 10, 11.

² Avidius Cassius claimed descent from C. Cassius, who had held the Syrian prefecture. His father was a Greek, a rhetorician of Cyrrhus, named Heliodorus, who had become prefect of Egypt.

³ Gallicanus, *Avid. Cass.* 2.: "quod avus tuus Hadrianus dixerit; . . . ejus autem exemplum ponere, quam Domitiani, qui hoc primus dixisse fertur, malui."

to slay him if they dared.¹ Such was the man who suddenly announced at Antioch that Aurelius was dead, assumed the title of emperor, and having received the ensigns of sovereignty from a trusty adherent, whom he named his prætorian prefect, invited the legions to sanction his usurpation. But violent and headstrong as he was, he had failed in his calculations. The legions detested him; they rose at once against him and slew him on the spot, without awaiting the order of the emperor. The report, meanwhile, of his defection reached Rome, and the senate boldly proclaimed him a public enemy; but its courage rapidly evaporated on the rumour that he was in full march for Italy, prepared, in the emperor's absence, to take dire vengeance for the insult, and give up the city to plunder. The head of the traitor was conveyed to Aurelius, who beheld it with pity and concern.² *What would he have done to you had he conquered?* exclaimed the bystanders. The sage calmly appealed to his own piety and virtue, and showed that all the princes who had perished violently before him, had fallen by their own deserts.³ He entreated the senate, to whom he left the punishment of this public crime, to deal mercifully with the guilty, requesting that no member at least of their order should suffer under his rule. The family of the traitor he caused to be spared, and even generously provided for them, and a few centurions only were sacrificed to the exigencies of military discipline.⁴ The senate, among whom Cassius

¹ Gallie. c. 4.: "meruit timeri quia non timuit," an allusion to Lucan, v. 317. Capitol. Anton. Phil. 21.: "cum per Egyptum Bucolici milites gravia multa fecissent, per Avidium Cassium retusi sunt."

² Capitol. M. Anton. Phil. 26.: "doluit denique Cassium extinctum, dicens, voluisse se sine senatorio sanguine imperium transigere."

³ Gallie. Avid. Cass. 8.: "non sic Deos colimus, nec sic vivimus, ut ille nos vinceret. . . meruisse Neronem, meruisse Caligulam; Othonem et Vitellium nec imperare voluisse." Galba's avarice he regarded as a public crime. The old story of burning the papers of the criminal, that his accomplices might not be known, is repeated of M. Aurelius by Ammianus Marcellinus, xxi. 16.

⁴ The letters between Aurelius, Faustina, and the senate on this subject, are very interesting, and seem to be genuine. The children of Avidius Cassius

may have had some half concealed accomplices, was delighted at a clemency by which it personally benefited, and poured forth its praise and gratitude in broken exclamations:—*O pious Antonine ; the gods preserve thee ! O Clement Antonine, the gods preserve thee !—thou mightest and wouldst not !—we have done what we should do !—may Commodus have his legitimate sovereignty !—confirm thou thy own offspring ; make our children safe and happy !—violence cannot harm good government !—the tribunitian power for Commodus !—thy presence and protection for Commodus !—hail to thy philosophy, to thy patience, to thy learning, to thy nobility, to thy innocence !—thou conquerest thy foes ; thou overcomest thy adversaries ! The gods protect thee !* and so on, all speaking together.¹

The news of the defection of Cassius had reached Aurelius on the Danube. He summoned his son, now in his fifteenth year, to his side, invested him with the robe of manhood, styled him *Prince of the Youth*, and designated him for the consulship. Having thus defied the assault upon his dynasty, he went forward to crush it. Before he reached Syria the enemy had fallen ; but Aurelius was occupied for some months in making dispositions for the future. During his progress he lost Faustina, who died suddenly at Halala, at the foot of the Taurus. Faithful to the last to the unfaithful, he desired the senate to decree her divine honours ; he gave her name to the place of her decease, and built her there a temple ; he established, moreover, a new foundation of Faustinian orphan girls.² Aurelius had never

Aurelius repairs to the East.

Death of Faustina.

A. D. 175.

were allowed to retain a portion of their patrimony, and were admitted to public office. Commodus, however, on his accession, caused them “all to be burnt alive.” *Gallie. Avid. Cass.* 13. In consequence of this attempted revolt in Syria, Aurelius ordained that in future no officer should hold the prefecture of the province in which he had been born. *Dion*, lxxi. 31.

¹ *Gallie. Avid. Cass.* 13. The date of the insurrection of Avidius Cassius is fixed by Clinton to the year 175.

² *Capitol. M. Anton. Phil.* 26. *Dion*, lxxi. 29. Some said that she killed

before visited the East. He examined with great interest the most renowned seats of ancient wisdom, and favoured them with tokens of his munificence.¹ Repairing from Antioch to Alexandria, where Cassius had gained support, he not only pardoned all offences, but condescended to act the part of a private citizen, frequenting the temples, schools, and lecture-rooms in the garb of a philosopher. On his voyage homeward he lingered also for a time at Athens, and, *to prove himself without sin*, in the true spirit of the Stoic religion, caused himself to be initiated in the mysteries.² In the autumn of 176 he finally reached Italy, landing at Brundisium, where he laid aside the military cloak and ensigns, and entered the city in the robe of peace. The senate decreed him a triumph over the Sarmatians, in which the young Commodus was also associated.

Triumph over
the Sarmatians.
A. D. 176.

An arch was erected in the Campus on the Flaminian Way, which was standing till modern times: some bas-reliefs have been saved from the ruin, which represent the apotheosis of Faustina. Aurelius sits below, gazing with affection on his consort, wafted upwards on the wings of a spirit. The graceful column, banded like that of Trajan with spiral sculpture, on which his exploits are recorded, still seems to follow her ascent to heaven. It was crowned with the statue of the emperor, who deserved to share with Trajan the title of the Best; and for many centuries these two noblest products of heathen culture, in the realms

The Antonine
column.

herself for fear of her complicity with Cassius being discovered; others that she died of an attack of gout.

¹ Capitol. l. c. I do not know how else to interpret "apud multas (Orientales provincias) philosophiæ vestigia reliquit." Philostratus in the *Lives* tells some anecdotes of Aurelius and the sophists, and also mentions that he was obliged to punish the incorrigible Antiochians by interdicting for a time their spectacles.

² Capitol. c. 27.: "ut se innocentem probaret." Aurelius, according to Dion, lxxi. 31., instituted salaried teachers of all sciences at Athens, "for people of all nations;" *πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις διδασκάλους ἐπὶ πάσης λόγον παιδείας μυσθὸν ἐτίθειον φέροντας*, which seems to indicate the establishment of lectures in various languages. If so, it was no doubt a novelty.

respectively of action and reflection, occupied the preëminent elevation which Christian piety has since assigned to St. Peter and St. Paul.¹

Shows and largesses, as usual, followed, some administrative measures were promulgated, Commodus was associated in the Tribunitian Power, and married with modest solemnities. But the chief of the empire could not resume his place in the senate and the palace. The Sarmatians had been triumphed over; nevertheless, they rose again, or continued still in arms. The Marcomanni, the Hermunduri, the Quadi, were easily tempted to resume them.² The efforts of the last ten years must be repeated, with failing confidence and diminished strength, against a foe more experienced, and perhaps even more audacious. Aurelius again girded on his armour, and required his son to attend upon him. He hurled a blood-stained javelin before the temple of Bellona as a defiance and proclamation of war, and went forth to confront the enemy.³ For three years he continued to prosecute his sad and painful task, to exhaust his own vigour, and the vigour of the empire, in a struggle in which ultimate success might well seem hopeless. He gained at least one considerable success by the hands of his lieutenant Paternus, and was hailed Imperator for the tenth time by the soldiers. The historians, indeed, affirm that the crowning victory was in sight, and that another year would have sufficed to reduce these restless foes to entire subjec-

Renewal of war
with the Sar-
matians and
Marcomanni.

Aurelius again
leaves Rome
for the fron-
tiers, and gains
a victory.

¹ That this column was originally surmounted by a statue of the emperor appears from the medals. This statue had long fallen, when Pope Sixtus V. replaced it in 1589 by a figure of the Apostle Paul. Bunsen's *Rom.* iii. 3. p. 330.

² Aurelius had required the Marcomanni to remove to a distance of 38 stadia from the bank of the Danube, a very trifling demand, and appointed fixed days and places for their intercourse with the Romans. The Iazyges and Quadi consented to restore their captives. The former sent back as many as 100,000; the latter notoriously neglected to observe this condition. Dion, lxxi. 15, 16.

³ Dion, lxxi. 33., adding, ὡς γε καὶ τῶν συγγενομένων αὐτῷ ἤκουσα. The solemnity was apparently already antiquated.

tion.¹ This, however, is quite incredible. A decisive victory might have compelled them to offer tribute, but probably no victory would have insured their paying it. Nor, indeed, was any such victory now to be gained, and, instead of their tribute being paid to the Romans, the great Sarmatian war was concluded by a peace opportunely bought by Rome. This final disgrace Aurelius did not live himself to witness. His weakly frame sank at last under its fatigues, and he was still, perhaps, buoyed up by hopes destined never to be accomplished, when he was rescued from impending disappointment by a fever, which carried him off in his camp at Vindobona.²

Death of M.
Aurelius.
A. D. 180.
A. U. 928.

The despondency which had seized on the gentle emperor's spirits is strongly marked in the circumstances of his last hours. While anticipating his own decease with satisfaction, and even with eagerness, he regarded himself as only a fellow-traveller on the common road of life with all around him, and took leave of his friends as one who was but just preceding them. If he regarded the condition of public affairs, the prospect of his son succeeding him was not such as to console him; for he

Reflections on
the death of
Aurelius.

¹ Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* l. c.; Dion, l. c.

² At Vindobona (Vienna), according to Victor; at Sirmium, according to Tertullian, *Apol.* 25. He seems to have believed himself that his disorder was natural, for, as is said, he desired his son to leave him that he might avoid the risk of infection. Almost his last words were a request to his attendants not to grieve for him, but to turn their thoughts to the still prevailing pestilence, and to their common perils. He even hastened his own end by abstaining from food. Dion, however, affirms for certain, that, though sick, he was actually cut off by poison, administered by the physicians in his son's interest: *οὐχ ἐπὶ τῆς νόσου ἦν καὶ τότε ἐνόσησεν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῶν ἰατρῶν, ὡς ἐγὼ σαφῶς ἤκονσα, τῷ Κομμόδῳ χαριζομένων.* The story may stand or fall with our general opinion of Dion's veracity. I am sorry to take leave of an author on whom I have had to lean so often and so long, with the expression of my distrust in his sources of secret history. From the first he shows a disposition to seize on the most flagrant imputations conveyed by his authorities, and as he approaches his own times these authorities are often mere private anecdotists. Capitolinus, who referred to Marius Maximus and to published histories, says nothing of this pretended crime, nor does Herodian.

could not hide from himself that Commodus was vicious, cruel, and illiterate.¹ The indulgence he had shown to his consort's irregularities might be pardoned by the state, to which they were of little moment; but his weakness in leaving to his graceless offspring the command of a world-wide empire must reflect more strongly on his memory. He may have judged, indeed, that the danger to the state from a bad prince was less than the danger from a disputed succession, especially in the face of the disasters accumulating around it. On his death-bed he warned his son not to underrate the peril from the barbarians, who, if at the moment worsted and discouraged, would soon revive, and return again to the assault with increasing vigour. And so he left the laws of inheritance, as now ordinarily received, to take their course, indicating his will that Commodus should succeed him by the simple form of recommending him to the care of his officers, and to the favour of the immortal gods. On the seventh day of his illness he admitted none but his unworthy son to his chamber, and after a few words dismissed him, covered his head for sleep, and passed away alone and untended. Born on the 20th of April, 121, and dying on the 17th of March, 180, he had almost completed his fifty-ninth year. His career had been divided into three nearly equal portions: the first, to his association in the empire with Antoninus; the second, to his accession to complete sovereignty; the third, from thence to his decease. The first was the season of his general education, the second that of his training for empire, in the last he exercised power uncontrolled. In each he had acquitted himself well, in each he had gained himself love and admiration; but the earlier periods were eminently prosperous and happy; the crowning period was a time of trial, of peril, fatigue, distress and apprehension. Historical

¹ *Capitol. M. Anton. Phil.* 28. : "fertur filium mori voluisse, cum eum talem videret futurum, qualis exstitit post ejus mortem; ne, ut ipse dicebat, similis Neroni, Caligulae, et Domitiano esset." His last words, addressed to the centurion of the watch, according to Zonaras (xii. 2), were, "Turn to the rising sun, for I am setting."

parallels between men of different times and circumstances are very apt to mislead us, yet I cannot refrain from indicating the comparison, which might be drawn with unusual precision, between the wise, the virtuous, the much-suffering Aurelius, and our own great and good king Alfred. Both arrived early and unexpectedly to power; both found their people harassed by the attacks of importunate enemies; they assumed with firmness the attitude of resistance and defence, and gained many victories in the field, though neither could fail to acknowledge the unequal conditions of the struggle. Both found themselves at the head of a weak and degenerate society, whose hour of dissolution had well-nigh struck. Nevertheless, they contended manfully in its behalf, and strove to infuse their own gallant spirit into a people little worthy of their championship. But Aurelius and Alfred were not warriors only. They were men of letters by natural predilection and early habit; they were legislators, administrators, and philosophers, with this difference, that the first came at the end of a long course of civilized government, the second almost at its beginning; the first at the mournful close of one period of mental speculation, the second at the fresh and hopeful commencement of another. The one strove to elevate the character of his subjects by the example of his own scrupulous self-examination; the other by precepts of obedience to an external revelation. But both were, from their early days, weak in body, and little fit to cope with the appalling fatigues of their position; both, if I mistake not, were sick at heart, and felt that their task was beyond their power, and quitted life prematurely, with little reluctance. In one respect, however, their lot was different. The fortunes of the people of our English Alfred, after a brief and distant period of obscurity, have ever increased in power and brightness, like the sun ascending to its meridian. The decline of which Aurelius was the melancholy witness was irremediable and final, and his pale solitary star was the last apparent in the Roman firmament.

M Aurelius
compared with
Alfred the
Great.

The circumstances of the empire might indeed well inspire profound anxiety in the breast of one to whom its maintenance was confided. Hitherto we have seen the frontiers assailed in many quarters, and the energies of the bravest princes tasked in their defence. But these attacks have been local and desultory. The Chatti on the Rhine, the Marcomanni on the Upper, the Sarmatians on the Lower Danube, the Roxolani on the shores of the Euxine, have often assailed and vexed the provinces, but separately and at different times; Aurelius had to make head against all these enemies at once. The unity of the empire imparted a germ of union to its assailants. Hence no champion of Rome had so hard a task; hence Aurelius, far from making permanent conquests beyond his frontiers, stood everywhere on the defensive, and confronted the foe by his lieutenants in Gaul, Pannonia, Dacia or Mœsia, while he planted himself commonly in the centre of his line of stations, at Carnuntum, Vindobona, or Sirmium; hence his wars were protracted through a period of twelve years, and though his partial victories gained him ten times the title of Emperor, none was sufficiently decisive to break the forces banded against him. The momentary submission of one tribe or another led to no general result; notwithstanding his own sanguine hopes, and the fond persuasion of his countrymen, his last campaign saw the subjugation of Scythia and the safety of the empire still distant and doubtful. The barbarians were stronger at this crisis than ever, strong in unity, stronger in arms and tactics, stronger possibly in numbers. Neither to Marius, we may believe, nor to Germanicus, nor to Trajan, would they now have yielded as heretofore. But the empire was at least as much weaker. The symptoms of decline, indeed, were as yet hardly manifest to common observation; under ordinary circumstances they might still have eluded the notice even of statesmen; but in the stress of a great calamity they became manifest to all. The chief of the state was deeply impressed with them. Against anxiety and apprehension he struggled as a matter

The barbarian
now stronger
and the empire
weaker than of
old.

of duty, but the effort was sore and hopeless; and from the anticipation of disasters beyond his control he escaped, when possible, to pensive meditations on his own moral nature, which at least might lie within it.

The brilliancy of the city, and the great provincial capitals, the magnificence of their shows and entertainments, still remained, perhaps, undimmed. The dignity of the temples and palaces of Greece and Rome stood, even in their best days, in marked contrast with the discomfort and squalor of their lanes and cabins. The spacious avenues of Nero concealed perhaps more miserable habitations than might be seen in the narrow streets of Augustus; but as yet we hear no distinct murmurs of poverty among the populace. The causes, indeed, were already at work which, in the second or third generation, reduced the people of the towns to pauperism, and made the public service an intolerable burden; the decline, namely, of agriculture and commerce, the isolation of the towns, the disappearance of the precious metals, the return of society to a state of barter, in which every petty community strove to live on its own immediate produce. Such, at a later period, was the condition of the empire, as revealed in the codes of the fourth century. These symptoms were doubtless strongly developed in the third, but we have at least no evidence of them in the second. We may reasonably suppose, indeed, that there was a gradual, though slow, diminution in the amount of gold and silver in circulation. The result would be felt first in the provinces, and latest in the cities and Rome itself, but assuredly it was already in progress. Two texts of Pliny assert the constant drain of specie to the East; and the assertion is confirmed by the circumstances of the case; for the Indians, and the nations beyond India, who transmitted to the West their silks and spices, cared little for the wines and oils of Europe, still less for the manufactures in wool and leather which formed the staples of commerce in the Mediterranean.¹ There was still

Symptoms of decline of the empire; contraction of monetary transactions from the diminution of the circulating medium.

¹ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vi. 26., xii. 41. The sums are stated at 400,000*l.* annually to India, and 800,000*l.* to the East generally.

a great, perhaps an increasing demand, for these metals in works of art and ornament, and much was consumed in daily use, much withdrawn from circulation and eventually lost by the thriftless habit of hoarding. But the supply from the mines of Thrace, Spain, and Germany was probably declining, for it was extracted by forced labour, the most expensive, the most harassing, and the most precarious. The difficulty of maintaining the yield of the precious metals is marked in the severe regulations of the later emperors, and is further attested by the progressive debasement of the currency.¹

Not more precise is our information respecting the movement of the population, which was also at this period on the verge of decline. To the partial complaints of
 Decrease in the population, such a decline in Italy, muttered, as they generally were, by the poets or satirists, I have hitherto paid little heed. In statements of this kind there is generally much false sentiment, some angry misrepresentation. The
 and substitution of slave for free labour, and decline in the number of slaves. substitution of slave for free labour in many parts of Italy, may have had the appearance of a decline in population, while it actually indicated no more than a movement and transfer. It was more important, however, in the future it foreshadowed than in the present reality. The slave population was not reproductive; it was only kept at its level by fresh drafts from abroad. Whenever the supply should be cut off, the residue would rapidly dwindle. This supply was maintained partly by successful wars, but still more by a regular and organized traffic. The slaves from the North might be exchanged for Italian manufactures and produce; but the vendors from many parts, such as Arabia and Ethiopia, central Africa, and even Cappadocia and other districts of Asia Minor, would take, I suppose, nothing but specie. With the contraction of the currency, the trade would languish, and under this depression a country like Italy, which was almost wholly

¹ *Cod. Justin.* xl. § 7. 4, 7. Akerman's *Roman Coins*, p. xiv.

stocked by importation, would become quickly depopulated. Still more, on the decline of the slave population, there would follow a decline of production, a decline in the means of the proprietors, a decline in the condition of the free classes, and consequently in their numbers also. That such a decline was actually felt under the Flavian emperors, appears in the sudden adoption of the policy of alimentionation, or public aid to impoverished freemen.¹

Nor was it in this way only that slavery tended to the decline of population. Slavery in ancient, and doubtless in all times, was a hot-bed of vice and selfish indulgence, enervating the spirit and vital forces of mankind, discouraging legitimate marriage, and enticing to promiscuous and barren concubinage. The fruit of such hateful unions, if fruit there were, or could be, engaged little regard from their selfish fathers, and both law and usage continued to sanction the exposure of infants, from which the female sex undoubtedly suffered most.² The losses of Italy from this horrid practice were probably the greatest; but the provinces also lost proportionably; the imitation of Roman habits was rife on the remotest frontiers; the conquests of the empire were consolidated by the attractions of Roman indulgence and sensuality; slavery threw discredit

Effects of vice,
flowing from
the institution
of slavery.

¹ We have seen that M. Aurelius instituted a new foundation of this kind in honour of Faustina. His bad successor seized upon these and similar funds. Pertinax found the alimentions nine years in arrear, and at the same time such a deficit in his treasury, that it was impossible to revive them. *Capitol. Pertin.* 9. They were restored, however, or replaced by new foundations, in more favourable times. *Lamprid. Alex. Sev.* 57.

² I have touched on this subject in Chapter XL. It is not necessary to refer to texts for the commonness of infanticide among the ancients. Tacitus specifies the Jews and the Germans as remarkable exceptions. (*Hist.* v. 5.; *Germ.* 19.) That the practice was still in use in the third century appears from the *Digest*, xxviii. 2.; nor was it forbidden, even by the Christian emperors, before Valentinian. That such was the fate of female oftener than of male children may be easily supposed. So Terence, *Heaut.* iv. 1. 12. "Meministin' me gravidam, et mihi te maximo opere edicere, Si puellam parerem, nolle tolli?" and Apuleius, *Metam.* x. p. 722.; Tertullian, *Ad. Nat.* 15. See C. G. Zumpt, *Brevölkerung in Alterthum*, p. 70.

on all manual labour, and engendered a false sentiment of honour, which constrained the poorer classes of freemen to dependence and celibacy; vice and idleness went hand in hand, and combined to stunt the moral and physical growth of the Roman citizen, leaving his weak and morbid frame exposed in an unequal contest to the fatal influences of his climate.¹

If, however, the actual amount of population in Italy and other metropolitan districts had but lately begun sensibly to decline, for some generations it had been recruited mainly from a foreign stock, and was mingled with the refuse of every nation, civilized and barbarian.² Slaves, freedmen, clients of the rich and powerful, had glided by adoption into the Roman gentes, the names of which still retained a fallacious air of antiquity, while their members had lost the feelings and principles which originally signalized them. As late as the time of the younger Pliny, we find the gentile names of the republic still common, though many of them have ceased to recur on the roll of the great magistracies, where they have been supplanted by others, hitherto obscure or unknown; but the surnames of Pliny's friends and correspondents, which distinguish the family from the house, are in numerous instances strange to us, and often grotesque and barbarous. The gradual exhaustion of the true Roman

¹ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* iii. 24., seems to intimate that, in his opinion, there was a great decline of population in Italy since the time when (in the third century, B. C.) she had armed 700,000 foot and 70,000 horse. Plutarch, *De Defect. Ora.* c. 8., says that Greece, in his day, maintained only 3,000 hoplites. Such statements are fallacious. We may observe that in the heat of the great European war, at the beginning of this century, Great Britain had a force of 800,000 men of all arms and services, while ten years ago, being a time of profound peace, she had not, perhaps, a quarter of that number, yet her population had nearly doubled. There seems, however, to be direct evidence that parts both of Greece and Italy had much declined even in the second century.

² There can be no question of the fact, though the texts referring to it bear a rhetorical complexion. See, for instance, Seneca, *Ad Helv.* 5.: "videbis majorem partem esse, quæ relictis sedibus suis venerit in maximam quidem et pulcherrimam urbem, non tamen suam."

blood had been already marked and deplored under Claudius, and there can be no doubt, though materials are wanting for tracing it, that the flux continued to gather force through succeeding generations.¹

The decay of moral principles which hastened the disintegration of Roman society was compensated by no new discoveries in material cultivation. The idea of civilization common to the Greeks and Romans was the highest development of the bodily faculties, together with the imagination; but in exploring the agencies of the natural world, and turning its forces to the use of man, the progress soon reached its limits. The Greeks and Romans were almost equally unsteady in tracing the laws of physical phenomena, which they empirically observed, and analysing the elements of the world around them. Their advance in applied science stopped short with the principles of mechanics, in which they doubtless attained great practical proficiency. Roman engineering, especially, deserves the admiration even of our own times. But the ancients invented no instrument for advancing the science of astronomy; they remained profoundly ignorant of the mysteries of chemistry; their medicine, notwithstanding the careful diagnosis of Hippocrates and Galen, could not free itself from connexion with the most trivial superstitions. The Greeks speculated deeply in ethics and politics; the Romans were intelligent students of legal theory and proce-

Limits of material improvement in ancient civilization.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 27.: "plurimis equitum, plerisque senatoribus non aliunde originem trahi." Zumpt, *Brevölkerung im Alterthum*, p. 37., suspects that Tacitus himself was of servile origin. I observe above forty surnames in Pliny's letters which are not to be found in the Onomasticon to Cicero. Of these there are three classes on which I should fix as probably indicating servile origin: 1. Greek; as Archippus, Apollinaris, Aristo, Eumolpus, Polyænus, Thrasea: 2. National; as Africus, Hispanus, Macedo, Mauricus, Sardus: 3. Names of quality or circumstance, as Genialis, Præsens, Restitutus, Robustus, Pudens, Rusticus, Tacitus, Tiro, Tranquillus. Statius, according to Funccius, *De Ling. Lat.* v. 197., is a servile name, "a stando." I have before remarked how many of the sophists at Athens and elsewhere claimed connexion with noble Roman families. They were freedmen and clients of Roman houses.

dure; but neither could discover from these elementary sciences the compound ideas of public economy. Their principles of commerce and finance were to the last rude and unphilosophical. They made little advance, at the height of their prosperity and knowledge, in the economy of labour and production; they made no provision for the support of the increasing numbers to which the human race, under the operation of natural laws, ought to have attained. We read of no improvements in the common processes of agriculture, none even in the familiar mode of grinding corn, none in the extraction and smelting of ores, none in the art of navigation. Even in war, to which they so ardently devoted themselves, we find the helmet and cuirass, the sword, spear, and buckler, identical in character and almost in form, from the siege of Troy to the sack of Rome. Changes in tactics and discipline were slight and casual, compelled rather by some change in circumstances than spontaneous or scientific. The ancient world had, in short, no versatility, no power of adaptation to meet the varying wants of its outward condition. Its ideas were not equal to the extension of its material dominion. A little soul was lodged in a vast body.

The Egyptian civilization, the Hindoo, the Chinese, as well as the Greek and Roman, have all had their natural limits, at which their vitality was necessarily arrested. Possibly all civilizations are subject to a similar law, though some may have a wider scope and a more enduring force than others; or possibly there may be a real salt of society in the principle of intelligent freedom, which has first learnt to control itself, that it may deserve to escape from the control of external forces. But Roman society, at least, was animated by no such principle. At no period within the sphere of historic records was the commonwealth of Rome anything but an oligarchy of warriors and slave-owners, who indemnified themselves for the restraint imposed on them by their equals in the forum by aggression abroad and tyranny in their households. The causes of its decline seem to have

The decline of Roman civilization dates from before the fall of the Republic.

little connexion with the form of government established in the first and second centuries. They were in full operation before the fall of the Republic, though their baneful effects were disguised and perhaps retarded by outward successes, by extended conquests, and increasing supplies of tribute or plunder. The general decline of population throughout the ancient world may be dated even from the second century before our era. The last age of the Republic was perhaps the period of the most rapid exhaustion of the human race; but its dissolution was arrested under Augustus, when the population recovered for a time in some quarters of the empire, and remained at least stationary in others. The curse of slavery could not but make itself felt again, and demanded the destined catastrophe. Whatever evil we ascribe to the despotism of the Cæsars, we must remark that it was Slavery that rendered political freedom and constitutional government impossible. Slavery fostered in Rome, as previously at Athens, the spirit of selfishness and sensuality, of lawlessness and insolence, which cannot consist with political equality, with political justice, with political moderation. The tyranny of the emperors was, as I have elsewhere observed, only the tyranny of every noble extended and intensified. The empire became no more than an ergastulum or barracoon on a vast scale, commensurate with the dominions of the greatest of Roman slaveholders. It is vain to imagine that a people can be tyrants in private life, and long escape subjection to a common tyrant in public. It was more than they could expect, more, indeed, than they deserved, if they found in Augustus, at least, and Vespasian, in Trajan and Hadrian, in Antoninus and Aurelius, masters who sought spontaneously to divest themselves of the most terrible attributes of their boundless autocracy.

We have noticed already the pestilence which befell Italy and many of the provinces in the reign of Aurelius. There is reason to believe that this scourge was no common disorder, that it was of a type new at least in the West, and that, as a new morbid agent, its ravages were more lasting, as well as

The effect of pestilence and other natural disturbances now permanently disastrous.

more severe, than those of an ordinary sickness. This plague, for it seems to merit the specific name, was observed by the great physician Galen, to whom it appeared as a new and startling phenomenon.¹ He has given some account of its symptoms, and, though its course and action are little known to us, there seems ground for believing that it formed an era in ancient medicine. At another time, when the stamina of ancient life were healthier and stronger, such a visitation might possibly have come and gone, and, however fatal at the moment, have left no lasting traces; but periods seem to occur in national existence when there is no constitutional power of rallying under casual disorders.² The sickness which in the youth of the commonwealth would have dispelled its morbid humours and fortified its system, may have proved fatal to its advancing years, and precipitated a hale old age into palsied decrepitude. The vital powers of the empire possessed no elasticity; every blow now told upon it with increasing force; the blows it slowly or impatiently returned were given by the hands of hired barbarians, not by the strength of its own right arm. Not sickness alone, but famines, earthquakes, and conflagrations, fell in rapid succession upon the capital and the provinces.³

¹ I have not seen Prof. Hecker's *Commentatio de Peste Antoniniana*, 1835, in which the little that is known of this plague is said to be collected and examined. Zumpt refers to the description of the symptoms by Galen: "Pustules appeared on the body, accompanied with inward heat and putrid breath, with hoarseness and cough. If the impostumes broke there was a chance for the patient's life, but if not, he was certain to die. Diarrhœa set in, and was the surest token of death."—*Bevölkerung im Alterthum*, p. 85. note.

² Niebuhr has expressed the opinion that "the ancient world never recovered from the blow inflicted upon it by the plague which visited it in the reign of M. Aurelius." (*Lectures on Roman Hist.* ii. 282.) His comparison of its effects to those of the great plague at Athens may be fanciful, to those of the Black Death of the middle ages more fanciful still. The apparent degeneracy of English society after the plague of London might have served him for another illustration. But society soon recovers from such calamities, if its constitution is sound. It is in the decay of nations that such blows form real historical epochs.

³ Zumpt, *Stand der Bevölkerung*, p. 84., gives a long list of earthquakes,

Such casualties may have occurred at other periods not less frequently or disastrously; but these were observed, while the others passed unnoticed, because the courage of the nation was now broken no less than its physical vigour, and, distressed and terrified, it beheld in every natural disorder the stroke of fate, the token of its destined dissolution.

Nor indeed was the alarm unfounded. These transient faintings and sicknesses were too truly the symptoms of approaching collapse. The long line of the northern frontier, from Odessus to the island of the Batavi, was skirted by a fringe of fire, and through the lurid glare loomed the wrathful faces

Desperate expeditious for resisting the attack of the barbarians.

of myriads, Germans, Scythians, and Sarmatians, all armed for the onslaught in sympathy or concert. To buy off the attack with bribes and blackmail; to deaden the shock by introducing other barbarians within the borders, on whom the first blow might fall, and possibly be repelled; to recruit the stricken remnant of the legions with strangers, slaves, and the refuse of the streets; such were the resources of the coward, the crafty, or the desperate; but little trust was placed, perhaps, in any of them. The people were smitten with an access of superstitious devotion; they breathed fresh warmth into their ancient ceremonies, and fanned to brighter flame their slumbering altar-fires; they sought again the long-derided oracles, and revolved prophetic scrolls with trembling eagerness; they raised new shrines to every deity whose power might temper for their preservation the air and the water, the sunshine or the moonshine.¹ They sacrificed many hecatombs; but

Revival of superstitious observances.

famines, and pestilences, from Augustus downwards. The plague of Aurelius had a second outbreak under Commodus (Dion, lxxii. 14.), in which 2,000 died in Rome daily. Another pestilence, more general and more terrible, is recorded about 260. See particularly Zosimus, i. 26., and Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vii. 21.

¹ The moral effect of these visitations in the middle of the third century is marked by the revival worship of all the deities supposed to have salutary influence in such cases, as of Apollo, Juno, Diana, Mars, Mercury, Liber, Neptune, Vulcan, Hercules, and Æsculapius. This may be traced on medals from

the blood of bulls and lambs no longer reassured the fainting heart of the worshippers; under the Republic Gauls and Greeks had been buried alive in the comitium in moments of public calamity; and in the age of Aurelius victims were sought among members, not of a foreign nation, but of a hostile faith. The first persecution of the Christians under Nero I have ascribed to popular indignation at the unruly temper of the Jews, with whom they were at first confounded, and by whom they were discovered and denounced. The procedure, once established against them in the capital on a special occasion, was extended abroad by zealous officials, and inflamed by the stubborn and mutinous spirit which seemed alone to animate them. Trajan treated Christianity as a breach of state discipline; but Hadrian, less of a martinet and more of a speculative thinker, controlled in part the assiduity of the proconsular courts-martial. Antoninus, at peace with himself and with all the world, entertained no jealousy or anger towards these harmless sectaries, and was willing to allay the exasperation which the troubles of the provinces engendered against them. But Aurelius regarded the crime of Christianity, the crime of refusing to worship the gods, not as an outbreak of turbulence and disobedience, but as an insult to the majesty of the national divinities, and the preëminence of the national cult. As a philosopher he cherished himself no faith in the deities of the Capitol;¹ but,

the emperor Gallus. Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 357, foll.; Zumpt, p. 86. The worship of Æsculapius appears to have spread at this period, particularly in Asia Minor. It is frequently noticed by Aristides, Celsus, and Apuleius. Justin Martyr remarks that the miracles of Jesus Christ were compared to the wonderful works of the God of healing. (*Apol.* i. 34.) The era is also marked by the appearance of pretenders to miraculous healing powers; new and mysterious remedies came into repute; experiments were made on the nervous system like those we call mesmeric, all calculated to enhance the idea of a divine interference in the healing of diseases. See Greswell, p. 314., whose explanation of these circumstances, as mere rivalry with the Christian miracles, seems to me inadequate.

¹ See, for instance, M. Anton. *Comment.* v. 8.: ὁποῖόν ἐστι τὸ λεγόμενον ὅτι συνέταξεν ὁ Ἀσκληπίως τούτῳ ἱππασίαν, ἢ ψυχρολουσίαν, ἢ ἀνυποδησίαν.

as emperor, he paid not the less respect to the fabled objects of vulgar adoration; nor could he excuse the horror with which the Christians shrank from joining formally in a service which the chief of the state deemed innocent and decorous.¹ These august shadows had nerved the arms of a line of heroes; these potent names had swayed the imperator in the field and the consul in the senate-house. They existed at least in the realities they had effected; in the deeds they had produced, in the resolutions they had inspired. Under their influence the empire had waxed and flourished; the actual crisis of her fortunes was not the moment to test their value by a wanton defiance. The firmness of the Christians seemed to Aurelius strange and unnatural. He scanned it as a marvel before he resented it as a crime.² In another generation the emperors will cease to reason or reflect on the phenomenon at all. The increasing disasters of the state will seem to them, as they seemed already to the multitude, a proof of the anger of the gods against the most formidable enemies of Olympus.³

The extent to which this persecution was carried under Aurelius is shown by records fully entitled to our reliance, whence we learn that many professors of the faith, of every condition and of either sex, were put cruelly to death both in the East and West. Of these victims Melito, bishop of Sardis, and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, were the most distinguished; but the martyrdom

Martyrdoms
of Melito, Poly-
carp, Pothinus,
and Blandina.

τοιούτων ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ, συνέταξεν τοῦτω ἢ τῶν ὄλων φέσις νόσον, ἢ πῆρωσιν, ἢ ἀποβολήν.

¹ Thus Seneca, as quoted by Augustin, *De Civitate Dei*, vi. 10.: "meminerimus cultum ejus magis ad morem quam ad rem pertinere."

² M. Anton. *Comment.* xi. 3.: μὴ κατὰ ψυχὴν παρὰταξιν, ὥς οἱ Χριστιανοί.

³ During the ages of persecution the Christian apologists very naturally set themselves to show that the calamities of the empire were such as had occurred before, and could not be ascribed to the new religion. So Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, i. 4.: "quando est humanum genus aquarum diluviis interemptum? non ante nos? quando mundus incensus in favillas et cineres dissolutus est? non ante nos? quando urbes amplissimæ marinis coopertæ sunt fluctibus? non ante nos? quando cum feris bella, et prælia cum leonibus gesta sunt? non ante nos?"

of Pothinus, Ponticus and Blandina, at Lyons, has been commemorated by the Church with no less affectionate devotion.¹ The rescripts of Trajan and Hadrian, which forbade the Christians to be sought out, and menaced their accusers with punishment, were abrogated or at least tacitly disregarded by terrified fanatics. The activity, indeed, of the persecution seems to have relaxed towards the close of this reign; but, this was owing rather to the emperor's apparent successes, and to the reviving confidence of his subjects, than to the remorse or compassion of either.²

Of the feelings and character of the imperial philosopher a deeply-interesting portraiture is left us in the memorials of his private meditations. Amidst the toils and terrors of the Marcomannic war, in the camp or the military station, on the banks of the Danube or the slopes of the Carpathians, Aurelius snatched a few hours from his labors to question his conscience on the discharge of his duties, to confirm himself in the precepts of philosophy, to fortify his soul against the troubles of the world, and the dread of death.³ The records of this self-examination extend to twelve books, each containing numerous remarks or maxims, generally unconnected, involving manifold repetitions, and presenting thoughts of very different value; but all tending to establish the broad principles of the Stoic philosophy, as then taught and understood. Aurelius had imbibed the learning of Rusticus, of Sextus the son

The "Meditations" or "Commentaries" of M. Aurelius.

¹ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 1-5. Sulp. Sever. ii. 46. St. Jerome, *Catal. Script.* c. 35. Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum sincera*.

² That such was the early Christian tradition appears from Tertullian's statement, that Aurelius checked the persecution of the Christians after the success of their prayers against the Quadi, and from a letter ascribed to him also favourable to them, which is appended to the Apology of Justin. We may fairly credit the tradition, while we question the authenticity of the facts on which it pretends to rest.

³ It was with a bitter sigh, no doubt, that Aurelius constrained himself to believe and affirm that no state of life is so favourable for philosophy as empire. *Comment.* xi. 7.: πῶς ἐναργὲς προσπίπτει τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἄλλην βίον ὑπὸθεσιν εἰς τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν οὕτως ἐπιτήδειον, ὥς ταύτην ἐν ᾗ νῦν ὄν τινι γάνεις.

of Plutarch, and of Apollonius, of whom we have no special knowledge; but of the sage Epictetus, whom he most studied and admired, some remains have been collected by which his own position among the best and wisest of the ancients is established, and which disclose the true basis of the imperial philosophy. The point of interest in these works is the place they hold between the teaching of the earlier philosophers and that of the revivalists of the third century. The time had come for a strong reaction towards positive belief. The Heathen mythology had drawn with it in its fall the principles even of natural religion. But this decline had reached its limits. In default of a better system, mythology itself might again rear its head. We have already noticed symptoms, faint and transient perhaps, of such an impending restoration. Even had the revelation of Christianity not been made, the Nemesis of unbelief would doubtless have raised some objects on the surface of the whelming waters, were they but straws, to clutch at; and the abortive efforts of Augustus and Domitian towards a ritualistic revival, show the direction in which the tide of opinion or sentiment was setting. But, already in the second century, the positive teaching of the Christians had reanimated religious speculation beyond its immediate circle, and we may trace in Epictetus and his imperial admirer the effects of a moral movement which it will not be unjust to ascribe, at least in part, to the influence of St. Paul and his Master. Both Epictetus and Aurelius recognise fully the personal existence of Deity: neither the concrete divinities of Heathen legend, on the one hand, nor any single and infinite existence on the other, but rather a multitude of abstract essences, the nature and distinctions of which are wholly beyond the scope of human definition.¹ This cordial belief in God as a moral Intelligence, is a step decidedly in advance

Reaction in favour of positive belief.

¹ Thus *Comment.* iii. 13.: οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἀνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα συναποφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις. v. 7. on the duty of simple prayer to the gods. vi. 10.: σέβω, καὶ εἰσταθῶ, καὶ θάρρῳ τῷ διοικοῦντι· i. e. providence. vi. 23.: ἐφ' ἅπασιν δὴ θεοὺς ἐπικαλοῦ. vi. 29.: αἰδοῦ θεοίς.

of Seneca, and amounts, indeed, almost to a negation of the fundamental article of the older Porch, the preëminence of a blind and soulless Fate. There is some advance, indeed, in Aurelius beyond Epictetus; the pupil is wiser than his master, and seems to arrive at a genuine conviction of a moral Providence. Nevertheless, on one important point, both the one and the other have fallen behind Seneca. Their hold of the doctrine of a future life appears even fainter than his. Epictetus, indeed, hardly ventures to regard it at all; Aurelius, more hopeful, more loving, more ardent, seems to cherish the fond aspiration, though he dares not assert it as a dogma.¹ But for this apparent falling-off a sufficient reason may be assigned. The later Stoics had attained a clearer idea of the personality of God, with a higher conception of His greatness and purity. They could not rest in the pantheism of an earlier age; immortality in their view, must be personal and individual, if it exist at all. But the temper of the age, as of every age of declining civilization, was deeply infected with the principles of materialism; it required faith in the specific dogma of the Christian Resurrection to allay its feverish distrust in a future state of being. In the next century, the mellow Stoicism of these amiable enthusiasts was supplanted, in turn, by the New Platonism, which advanced from the faint apprehension of a personal deity to a grasp of his attributes and nature; which embraced a distinct belief in the emanation of the soul from him and yearned for reunion with him. The errors of the Alexandrian School, fantastic as they were, served to prepare mankind for the reception of the Gospel. Thus it was that Philosophy and Religion at last united on the solid ground of an intelligent faith in God. On this ground was raised the structure of the Athanasian theology. The clouds and fogbanks of Plotinus and Porphyry, of Julian and Libanius, were replaced by the enduring fabric of the doctrine of the Christian Trinity.

Few books leave a profounder impression of melancholy

¹ *Comp. Comment.* iv. 32., v. 13., vi. 15. 28., viii. 58., x. 28.

than the Commentaries of the good Aurelius. With our knowledge of the circumstances under which they were compiled, the pangs of society around him, the vexations he personally suffered, and the lack of spiritual hope to which his own doctrines condemned him, it is sad rather than cheering to note the stern self-repression which forbids, throughout these private meditations, the utterance of a single complaint, the heaving of a single sigh. One strong burst of natural feeling would be a relief to the reader, as it would have been doubtless to the writer himself. One passionate reference to the troubles of the empire, and the sufferings of the people, or to his own endurance, with its transient gleams of success and hopes of triumph, would have imparted a more general interest to reflections which now address themselves only here and there to a few abstract reasoners.¹ But no! the imperial theorist will live and die a martyr to his theory. The Christians in the arena of Lugdunum suffered, perhaps, no greater torments. Nor was the temper of Aurelius naturally hard and unbending. It was, on the contrary, almost feminine in its softness. He imbibed his religious feelings from his mother, his views of morals and philosophy from his teachers; he was like wax in the hands of those he loved, and he loved all who showed love towards him, and some even who should have loved him, but did not.² In his public career he betrayed a little weakness; in his domestic relations his infirmity was still more conspicuous. Even his meditations, with their anxious and importunate scruples, seem to betray some want of decision, some littleness of view and purpose. We must smile at the fervour with which the wisest

Melancholy character of the "Meditations" or "Commentaries" of Aurelius.

¹ The "Commentaries" abound, however, in noble reflections on the duties of the ruler towards his people. Comp. vi. 29.: *μη ἀποκαίσαρώθης, μη βιάθης*. vii. 36.: *βασιλικὸν, εὖ μὲν πράττειν, κακῶς δὲ ἀκοίειν*. vi. 34.: *τὸ τῷ σμῖναι μὴ σέμερον, οὐδε τῇ μελίσει συμφέρει*.

² M. Anton. *Comment.* i. 3.: *παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τὸ θεοσεβές*. His special obligations to each of his teachers, Diognetus, Rusticus, Sextus of Chæronea, Apollonius, &c., are acknowledged in turn.

of princes exhorts himself to rise betimes in the morning.¹ To fix deeply in the mind the conviction of the vanity of earthly things, is a hard lesson for all: it was hard even for the slave Epictetus, harder, surely, for the emperor Aurelius. It is hard for a Christian, much harder for a Pagan; hard for those who look for substantial glories hereafter; hardest of all for such as have no hope beyond the grave, or, if they dare to cherish their yearning in secret, are forbidden by their theories to give it utterance. Nevertheless, the constant recurrence of this theme in the work before us, and the variety of argument and illustration with which it is enforced, disclose a weakness which cannot be wholly overlooked.² He who would exact from himself and us so high a standard of purity and self-renunciation, while he limits us so strictly to the resources of our own strength and virtue, discarding all the aid of a higher power, which even the Heathen passionately demanded, should have been himself stronger, firmer, and more self-supporting.

Yet once more, in justice to this paragon of Heathen excellence, let us remember that Aurelius represents the decrep-

General hope-
lessness of so-
ciety at this
era.

itude of his era. He is hopeless because the age is hopeless. He cannot rise beyond the sphere of ideas around him. The heathen world looked for no renovation of a society which was visibly perishing before its face. The idea of constant advance of mankind towards perfection had never formed an element in its aspirations; and now, when the popular notion of its degeneration was actually realized, it accepted its apparent destiny without a murmur. Even the Christians could with difficulty surmount these desponding anticipations. To them, also, the decline of society was fully manifest; nor did they regard the diffusion of religious truth as a means of cure and restoration. They believed that the Deity would take up His abode in the soul of the earnest Christian; they were con-

¹ M. Anton. *Comment.* v. 1.: ὁρθρον ὅταν δυσόκνως ἐξεγείρη, πρόχειρον ἔστω, ὅτι ἐπὶ ἀνθρώπου ἐγείρομαι.

² *Comment.* iii. 5., iv. 3. 32. 38., v. 33., vi. 13. 15. 34., x. 28.

vinced of the power of attaining personally the closest union with the Spirit of God; they gloried in the assurance of a future exaltation to the mansion of their Father in heaven, through the strength which He alone could furnish, or the change which He alone could work in them. And this assurance, warmly embraced, might render them cheerful and even triumphant amidst the public calamities, and in their own pains and martyrdoms. But they expected no general revival of society through the purer morality of the Gospel; no fructifying of the blessed seed in the bosom of an effete civilization. For such a progress and result no time, as they anticipated, would be allowed, for the end of the world appeared to be at hand; the outward frame of law and order was only upheld, in their view, by the continued existence of the empire; stricken and shaken as that framework was, it could not long endure, and on its fall would follow the dissolution of the divine creation, the conflagration of the universe, the end of all things. To Justin and Tertullian, to Origen and Arnobius, a revelation of the impending establishment of Christianity would have seemed as strange and incredible as to Aurelius him.

In my first chapter I indicated this momentous revolution as the period to which I purposed to conduct my history of the Romans under the Empire. I had hoped to
entwine with my relation of events, and my re-
view of literature and manners, an account of the change of
opinion by which a positive belief in religious dogmas was
evolved from the chaos of doubt, or rose upon the ruins of
baffled incredulity; to trace the progress of this moral transformation from the day when the High Priest of Jupiter, the Head of the Roman hierarchy, the chief interpreter of divine things to the Pagan conscience, declared before the assembled senators that immortality was a dream, and future Retribution a fable, to that when the Emperor, the Chief of the State, the Head of the newly established Church of the Christians, presided over a general council of bishops, and

Conclusion.

affirmed at its bidding the transcendent mystery of a Triune Deity. But I have learnt by a trial of many years to distrust my qualifications for so grave a task. And other cares impede me, other duties warn me to desist. I have now reached the point at which the narrative of my great predecessor Gibbon commences, and much as I regret that the crisis should be unfolded to the English reader by one who, unhappy in his school and in his masters, in his moral views and spiritual training, approached it, with all his mighty powers, under a cloud of ignoble prejudices, I forbear myself from entering the lists in which he has long stalked alone and unchallenged. The work I now offer as completed, embraces what may be loosely designated the constitutional period of the Roman monarchy, extending from the graceful primacy of Pompeius to the barbarian despotism of the son of Aurelius. That it should be permanently accepted as the English History of the Upper Empire, is more than I venture to anticipate; but I shall not regret its being in due season supplanted, if I lead a successor of firmer grasp and wider vision to sift our records in a critical and independent spirit.

INDEX

TO THE

HISTORY OF THE ROMANS UNDER THE EMPIRE.



- ABGARUS**, king of Osrhoene, his treacherous counsel to Crassus, i. 422. Escapes to the Parthian camp, 423.
- Abgarus**, king of Edessa, submits to Trajan, vii. 304.
- Abilene**, ethnarchy of, v. 269.
- Accius**, his plays, iii. 73.
- Acco**, Caesar's execution of, ii. 12.
- Acerronia**, slain by mistake for Agrippina, vi. 101.
- Achaia**, extent of the Roman Province of, i. 34. The government of, assigned by P. Clodius to Piso, 305. Under Appian Claudius, ii. 217. Occupied by Caesar, 218. Greece proper and the islands, not made a province before the time of Julius Caesar, iv. 119. Its limits obscurely defined by Strabo, 119. Consigned by Augustus to the senate, 119. Its freedom proclaimed by Nero, vi. 270. Again reduced to a province by Vespasian, vii. 26.
- Achillas**, minister of Ptolemæus XII., invites Pompeius to Alexandria, ii. 244. Carries Pompeius ashore, 245. Attacks Caesar, 258. Assassinated by Ganymedes, 260.
- Achilius Glabrio**, ex-consul, condemned for fighting in the amphitheatre, vii. 125. Executed by Domitian for Judaism or Christianity, 126.
- Acratus**, Nero's agent for plundering Greece and Asia of their works of art, vi. 142.
- Acta diurna**, or public journals, iv. 380. Burlesqued in the satiricon of Petronius, 331.
- Acte**, Nero's mistress, vi. 69, 96. Warns him against Agrippina, 98. Assists at his obseques, 269.
- Actian games**, foundation of the, iii. 258.
- Actium**, the, or temple of Apollo, iii. 248. Position of Antonius at, 248. The battle of Actium, 252. Results produced by this battle, 254. Date of the battle, 257. Foundation of the city of Nicopolis at Actium, 257.
- Adcantuannus**, king of the Sotiates, submits to P. Clodius, i. 296.
- Ad Fines**, or Avigliana, the boundary of Italy at, iv. 88.
- Addon**, governor of Artagera, treacherously wounds Calus Caesar, iv. 218.
- Adminius**, king of the Trinobantes, solicits Caius Caesar for a share of the kingdom of Camobelinus, vi. 19. Detained at Rome, v. 355.
- Adrumetum** held by Considius for the republicans, ii. 290. Sum exacted by Caesar from the citizens, 304.
- Aduatui**, their city taken by the Cimbrî and Teutones, i. 202. Allies of the Nervii, 272. Reduced by Caesar, 279-281. Attack Q. Cicerus's camp, 304. Their headquarters occupied by Caesar, and attacked by the Germans, 400-403.
- Adultery**, ancient Roman punishment for, v. 154. Disgraceful method of obtaining impunity, 154, 155. Tiberius's edict, closing this means of retreat, 156. The laws of adultery enforced by Domitian, vii. 106.
- Ædiles**, the, under the empire, iii. 401.
- Ædii**, honoured by the Romans with the title of brothers, i. 197 *ante*, 214. Their ascendancy in Gaul, 203. Threatened by the Sequani and Arverni, 246. Defeated by the Sequani and Suevi, 264. Supported by Rome, 267. The Helvetii march through their territory, 247, 248. Their friendship with the Boii, 259; ii. 15. Resume their ascendancy, i. 255. Their fidelity to Rome, 397, ii. 11. Their divisions and vanilation, 19. Massacre the Roman settlers, are reduced, and pardoned, 21. Revolt again, 24-26. Defeated by Labienus, 26. Caesar's leniency to them, 34. Revolt under Julius sacrovir, v. 168. Suppressed by Silbus, 168, 169.
- Ægina**, its condition under Augustus, iv. 367.
- Ægina**, Ligurian town of, sacked, i. 195.
- Ælian law repealed**, i. 179.
- Ælia Petina**, married to and divorced by Claudius, v. 309. Narcissus recommends their re-marriage, 407, 443.
- Ælia Capitolina**, Jerusalem occupied by the Roman colony of, vii. 318.
- Ælian and Fufian laws repealed by Clodius**, i. 179.
- Ælius Gallus**, his expedition against the Arabians, iv. 97-100.
- Ælius Saturninus**, hung from the Tarpeian rock for a libel on Tiberius, v. 188.

- Æmilian Gardens** (the residence of Tigellinus), breaking out of the fire of Rome in them a second time, vi. 180.
- "Æneid"** of Virgil, iv. 443. The glorification of the Romans and of Augustus, 443. The religious idea which pervades it, 443. Its vindication of monarchy, 444. Augustus shadowed forth in Æneas, 446.
- Ærarium**, the public, and the *fiscus* of the emperor, iii. 425.
- Æthiopians**, the, invade Egypt, and are repulsed by Petronius, iv. 102.
- Afer**. See Domitius.
- Afranius, L.**, Pompeian, elected consul, i. 160. Cicero's opinion of him, 161. Wishes to confer on Pompeius the legation to Egypt, 329. Caesar's opinion of him as a general, ii. 128. His civil and military capacity, 181. His campaign in Spain, 185. His camp near Ilerda, 187. Checks Caesar, 189. Prepares to retreat from Ilerda, 144. Retreats, and is closely followed by Caesar, 145. The two armies drawn up in battle array, 152. Capitulates to Caesar, 153. Re-joins Pompeius, 190. Suspected by the Pompeians, 225. Joins Cato at Coreyræ, 251. His death, 302, 303.
- Afranius Potitus**, devotes his life for the recovery of the emperor Caius, v. 218.
- Africa**, province of, placed under the care of Tubero, ii. 86. State of the province in B. C. 44, 164. Campaign of Curio, 165-167. Assigned to Augustus, iii. 188. Held by Lepidus, 173, 184. Committed by Augustus to Statilius Taurus, 203. Constituted by Augustus a senatorial province, iv. 92. Its corn-trade, wealth, and tranquillity, 92. Population of the province in the time of Augustus, 342. Its state in A. D. 17, v. 56. Exploits of Tacfarinas, 56. Who is defeated by Furius Camillus, 57. Fresh incursions of Tacfarinas, 166. Two legions stationed in, 142.
- Agamemnon**, a nickname of Pompeius, ii. 225.
- Agathe**, withdrawn from the supremacy of Massilia, iv. 74.
- Agendicum**, legions stationed by Caesar at, i. 405.
- Agerinus**, announces to Nero Agrippina's escape from drowning, vi. 102.
- Agon Capitolinus**, quinquennial contests in music, poetry, and eloquence, instituted by Domitian, vii. 133-136.
- Agrana**, in Arabia, taken by the Romans under Ælius Gallus, iv. 99.
- Agrarian laws** of the Gracchi, i. 25. Strength derived by the state from these concessions, 27. The agrarian law of Servilius Rullus, 109. Attempts of Pompeius to obtain an agrarian law for his veterans, 169. Caesar's agrarian bill, 171. The agrarian law of Lucius Antonius, iii. 52.
- Agri Decumates**, the land, under Augustus, iv. 178. Under Trajan, vii. 176.
- Agricola, C. Julius**, commands the xth legion in Britain, vii. 79. Governs Aquitania, 79. Becomes consul, 79. Betroths his daughter to Tacitus, 79 *note* 2. His campaigns in Britain, 71. Establishes himself on the Tyne and Solway, 72, 73. Battle of the Grampians, 73-75. His intended circumnavigation of Britain, 77. Recalled by Domitian, who is jealous of him, 77, 78. Has triumphal honours, and retires from public life, 80. Compared with Corbulo, 80. His death ascribed to Domitian, 144, 145.
- Agricola, Calpurnius**, appointed to the command in Britain, vii. 454. Attacks the Caledonians, 454.
- Agrippa, M. Vipsanius**, his origin and early career, iii. 211-214. Supports Augustus from the first, 56. His destiny predicted, 60. Prosecutes Cassius for the murder of Caesar, 138. At Philippi, 213. At Perusia, 179. Advances to confront Antonius, 182. His victories in Aquitania, 196. Constructs the Julian Haven, 196, 197. Defeats a Pompeian fleet, 199. Completely defeats Sextus Pompeius, 201, 246. His adleship, 234, 235. Commands a squadron for Octavius' fleet at the battle of Actium, 246, 251. Entrusted with the government of Rome during the absence of Octavius, 259. A "cerulean banner" conferred on him by Octavius, 816. Said to have urged Augustus to resign his power, 324, iv. 128. Governs Rome during the retirement of Augustus, iii. 363. Quells a revolt in Aquitania, iv. 70. Consul and censor with Octavius, iii. 328, 329. Completely reduces Spain, iv. 67, 68. Marries Marcella, iii. 331, iv. 127. Governor of Rome, iii. 337. His Pantheon, 339. The presumptive successor to Augustus, 339, 340. His military roads in Gaul, iv. 80. Less popular than Marcellus, 128. Sent by Augustus on a mission to the East, 129, 162. Marries Julia, 134. His uneasy relations with Augustus, 136. His children by Julia, 136. Represses an outbreak of the Cantabrians, 137. Tribune, 140. His sons adopted by Augustus, 155. Visited in Syria by Herod, who leads him through Judea, 162. Settles the affairs of the kingdom of the Bosphorus, 163. Favors granted by him to the Jews, 164. His harsh treatment of the Illyrians, 164. Returns to Rome, and declines a triumph, 165. His last campaign in Pannonia, 165. His death and character, 166, 167. His family, 169. Completion of the hall of Agrippa, 192. His "Orbis Pictus," or map of the world, iii. 422; iv. 323. His baths at Rome, vii. 35.
- Agrippa Postumus**, youngest child of M. Agrippa and Julia, his birth, iv. 169. Adopted into the Julian family by Augustus, 220. His mental and bodily defects, 252. Banished to Planasia, 253. Reported visit of Augustus to him, 281, 282. Put to death on the accession of Tiberius, v. 11.
- Agrippa, Clemens** the false, v. 87, 88.
- Agrippa**, son of Beronice, See Herod Agrippa.
- Agrippina**, daughter of Agrippa and Julia, married to Germanicus, iv. 256, 279; v. 23. Her masculine spirit, v. 22, 34, 178. Awakens Tiberius's jealousy by her ad-

- dress to the legionaries, 34, 36. Her numerous family, 25. Accompanies Germanicus to the East, 61. Plancina's rivalry, 61. Dying charge of Germanicus to her, 67. Comes to Rome with his remains, 73. Praises and acclamations lavished on her and her children by the people, 76. Enmity of Tiberius and Sejanus to her, 179. Her ruin plotted by Sejanus, 190. Quarrel with Tiberius, 191-192. Suspicions against her instilled by Sejanus, 209. Tiberius complains of her to the senate, 214. She is banished to Pandateria, 215, 216. Starves herself, 237. Her remains excluded from the mausoleum of the Cæsars, but subsequently honorably interred by Caius, 238.
- Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus and Agrippina, married (1) to Crispus Passienus, vi. 56; (2) to L. Domitius, by whom she has Nero, v. 250; vi. 55. Executed by Caius, v. 351. Recalled by Claudius, 363, 370, 407. Her son Lucius Domitius (Nero), 422. Her feud with Messalina, 423. In league with the freedmen of Claudius against Messalina, 424, 430, 437. Her memoirs, 423, 424. Her ambition and artifices, 437. Betroths Octavia to Nero, and gains over Vitellius, 438, 443. Her marriage with Claudius, 440. Recalls Seneca from exile, 442. Causes the death of Lollia, and the exile of Calpurnia, 443. Pallia, her paramour, 443. Courts the army, and founds Colonia Agrippinensis, 445. Affects to be a partner in the empire, 446. Her increasing influence, 448, 451. Procures the condemnation of Statilius Taurus, 451. Her further triumphs, 453. Employs delators against Domitia Lepida, who is executed, 455. Poisons Claudius, 456. Her measures for the succession of Nero, 458. Present at the exhibition of the British captives at Rome, 37. Her education of Nero, vi. 56. Appoints Burrhus and Seneca his tutors, 84. Contests with the senate for influence over her son, 83, 84. Her arrogance, 67. Seneca and Burrhus combine against her, 68. She quarrels with Acte, 69. Disgrace of Pallia, and alarm and menaces of Agrippina, 73. Her dissension with Nero, and spirited defence of herself, 78-81. The charges against her declared unfounded, 81. Detested by the Romans, 98. Intrigues of Poppæa against her, 99. Retires from court, 100. Failure of an attempt to destroy her, 101. Her murder and burial, 102-104.
- Akiba, the rabbi, his typical character, vii. 315. Nominates Barcochebas to the chieftainship of the Jewish people, 317. His cruel death, 318.
- Alauda, Cæsar's Gaulish legion so named, ii. 70.
- Alba, house of Pompeius at, i. 183; ii. 79. Sides with Augustus, ii. 93.
- Alban, the, submit to Trajan, vii. 303.
- Albici, the, aid the Massilians against the Cæsarians, ii. 143, 157.
- Albinus, his attempt on Spain, and death, vi. 840.
- Albuella, wife of Satrius, executed for incestus, v. 243.
- Alcantara, Trajan's bridge at, vii. 253.
- Alesia, its site, siege, and capture by Cæsar, ii. 39-32.
- Alexander the Great, his statue at Gades, i. 192. Answer of the Gaulish chieftains to him, 228. His tomb at Alexandria visited by Cæsar, ii. 297. And by Augustus, iii. 280. Germanicus compared to him, v. 69.
- Alexander, son of Antiochus and Cleopatra, the kingdoms of Armenia, Parthia, and Media assigned by Antiochus to, iii. 226. Betrothed to Jotape, daughter of the king of Media, 237.
- Alexander Libanus, prefect of Egypt, declares for Vespasian, vi. 349. The second procurator in Judea, 421.
- Alexander, son of Aristobulus, carried by Pompeius to Rome, iii. 299. Put to death, 301.
- Alexander, son of Herod the Great, restored to liberty, iv. 163. Put to death by his father, 216.
- Alexander, Julius, takes part in the reduction of Seleucia, vii. 306, 307.
- Alexander and the Alexandrians give law to Egypt, i. 359. The Alexandrians contemptible as a soldiery, 351. Conduct between them and Cæsar's soldiers, ii. 255. Their character, 258. Rise against Cæsar, 265. Who burns the Egyptian fleet and, accidentally, part of the library, 269. Submission of the Alexandrians to Cæsar, 269. Extravagant conduct of Antonius at Alexandria, iii. 225. The city described, 229-232. Entered by Octavius, 226. A Roman legion quartered in, 280. Deprived of its municipal privileges by Augustus, 280. Jews a third part of the population, 285. Corn-fleets of Alexandria, iv. 315. The Jews at Alexandria insulted by the natives, v. 819. And by the Roman governor Avilius Flaccus, 519. Consequent riot and disgrace of Flaccus, 511. Disturbances caused by a remnant of the Zealots from Jerusalem, vii. 285. The city visited by Hadrian, 553. Character of its university, 571. Hadrian's account of the people, 572. Their ingratitude to him, 575, 576. Dion Chrysostom's "Oration on the Alexandrians," 576.
- Aliens, Roman, comprehension of, in the state, i. 23.
- Aliso, a Roman station near the Rhine, erected by Drusus, iv. 182. Varus fails to reach it, 274. Abandoned by its garrison, 274. Its position, 275 *note* i.
- Alliedus, proposes to legalize the marriage of uncle and niece, v. 440.
- Allia, a name of evil omen, i. 189.
- Allobroges, intercourse of the Catilinarian conspirators with the, i. 119. Defeated by Fabius, 196. Absorbed into the *Provincia*, 196. Send envoys to Rome and reveal Catilla's offers to Cicero, 209, 210. Resist and are subdued, 210. Their territory, 214. Geneva their frontier-town, 241. The Helvetii determine to force their way through the territory of the Allobroges, 241. Defeated by Pompeius,

241. Compelled by Cæsar to furnish provisions to the Helvetii, 258. Their endeavors to prevent Cæsar from crossing the Rhone, ii. 27.
- Almo, the river, the "mother of the gods" of the Gauls, vi. 84.
- Alpinulus, Julius, the Helvetian chief, put to death by Valens, vi. 323.
- Alps, operations of Augustus for securing the passes of the, iv. 86. The Pennine Alps, i. 287.
- Ambiani, a Belgian tribe, joins the confederacy against the Romans, i. 267. Submit to Cæsar, 271.
- Ambiliati, the, join a maritime confederacy against Cæsar, i. 290.
- Ambiorix, chief of the Eburones, i. 392. Attacks the Romans, 392. His courage and craft, 392. Destroys two legions, 393. Surrounds Q. Cicero's camp, 394. His defeat and escape, 399. Cæsar issues forth in quest of him 400. Eludes Cæsar, 404. Leads the remnant of the Eburones, ii. 86.
- Ambrones, the, destroyed by Marius, i. 204.
- Amphipolis, camp of the triumvirs at, iii. 164.
- Amphitheatre, the, of the Romans. *See* Circus.
- Ampius, prevented by Cæsar from robbing the temple of Ephesus, ii. 253.
- Amyntas, minister and general of Deiotarus, receives the throne of Pisidia from Antonius, iii. 190. Abandons Antonius and joins the Cæsarians, 249. Deserts the senatorian party for Antonius, iv. 110. Confirmed in his kingdom by Augustus, 110.
- Ananias, or Annas, high priest of Jerusalem, a chief of the Herodians, vi. 429. Insulted and menaced by the Zealots, 443. Murdered by them, 449.
- Anceles, a British tribe, submit to Cæsar, i. 389.
- Ancestors, wax effigies of, of distinguished Romans, iv. 19.
- Ancona, Trajan's arch at, vii. 206.
- Ancrea, monument of Augustus at, iv. 284.
- Andi, a tribe of Gauls, compelled to submit to the Romans, i. 282, 289. Revolt of, suppressed, v. 168.
- Anglesey, rout of the Druids by Suetonius Paulinus in, vi. 42.
- Anicetus Cerealis, proposes a temple to Nero, vi. 152. Put to death by him, 162.
- Anicetus, Nero's commander of the fleet at pisa, vi. 101, 102. Pretends an intrigue with Misenus, undertakes the murder of Agrippa with Octavia, 123.
- Annalis, prætor, his proscription and death, iii. 144.
- Annalis lex, iii. 180.
- Anna, Clodia's widow, divorced by Piso, i. 93.
- Annan family, raised to the consulate by the Cæsars, vi. 254 *note*.
- Anteius, suspected by Nero, as a friend of Agrippina's, vi. 263.
- Antigonos, son of Aristobulus, carried by Pompeius as a hostage to Rome, iii. 299. Invades Palestine with the aid of the Parthians, 393. Becomes master of Jerusalem, 394. Executed by Antonius with unusual atrocity, 395.
- Antimachus, taken by Statius as his model, vii. 229.
- Antinous, Hadrian's favourite, his death, vii. 375.
- Antioch, description of, iv. 361. Second to Alexandria alone in its grandeur and population, 362. The great earthquake at, vii. 299. Hadrian's visit to Antioch, 378. Which disgusts him with its frivolity and licentiousness, 378. Hadrian insulted by the citizens, 379.
- Antiochus, king of Commagene, sues for permission to wear the Roman toga, i. 358. Joins Pompeius in the civil war, ii. 188. Besieged in Samosata by Ventidius and afterwards Antonius, iii. 192. Put to death, iv. 118.
- Antiochus, restored by Claudius to his kingdom of Commagene, v. 379. Supports Vespasian, vi. 350.
- Antiochus Asiaticus, king of Syria, dethroned by Pompeius, i. 188.
- Antiochus Epiphanes, his attempts to Hellenize the Jews, iii. 290. His buildings at Athens, iv. 356.
- Antipater, the Idumean, appointed by Pompeius, minister of Hyrcanus, iii. 299. His ascendancy in Palestine, 301.
- Antipater, son of Herod the Great, put to death by his father, iv. 216.
- Antipolis (Antibes), besieged by the Ligurians, iv. 195. Taken from the supremacy of Massilia, iv. 74.
- Antistia divorced by Pompeius at Sulla's command, i. 93.
- Antistius, prætor in Spain, i. 102.
- Antistius, prætor, exiled for lampooning Nero, vi. 115, 116.
- Antistius, T. joins Sextus Pompeius, but finally abandons him, iii. 204.
- Antistius Labro. *See* Labro.
- Antonla, mother of Germanicus, divulges the conspiracy of Sejanus against the life of Tiberius, v. 228. Distinctions conferred upon her by the emperor Caius, 290.
- Antonla, daughter of Claudius by Ælia Petina, her marriage with Cnæus Pompeius Magnus, v. 399.
- Antonine column at Rome, described, vii. 473.
- Antonine period of Roman history, its character, vii. 7. Improperly limited to the reigns of Plus and Aurelius, it should commence with Vespasian and extend to the death of Alexander Severus, 8.
- Antoninus, T. Aurelius, chosen by Hadrian for his successor, vii. 388. Required by Hadrian to adopt M. Annus Verus and L. Verus, 388. His family names, 395. His surname of Plus, 397. His early career and character, 398. Unanimous testimony of antiquity to his virtues, 398, 400. Troubles in his reign from the Jews, Daci, Alani, Britons, &c., 400. His paternal government, buildings, and laws, 402, 405. His indulgence to the Christians, his mildness, and domestic life, 405, 408. Marries his daughter Faustina to M. Aurelius, 396, 409. Numerous busts and medals of him, 412. His composure in death and last watchword, 413. Epoch

- of Antoninus surveyed, 413, 449. Wall of Antoninus, vii. 402. The itinerary of Antoninus, 400. Celebrated juriconsults who flourished in his reign, 405.
- Antonius, Caius, becomes consul, in conjunction with Cicero, i. 116.
- Antoninus, Caracalla, decree of, communicates the Roman franchise to all subjects of the empire, vii. 423.
- Antonius Primus, leads Vespasian's forces into Italy, vi. 355. Disregards the orders of Vespasian and Mucianus, 357. Defeats the Vitellians at Bedriacum, 357. Permits, if he does not command, the sack and burning of Cremona, 358. Crosses the Apennines and offers terms to Vitellius, 362. Marches along the Flaminian Road to the gates of Rome, and storms the city and the Praetorian camp, 369, 370. Claims the slaves and furniture of the palace, and sets up Domitian as Caesar, 373. Praetorian insignia conferred on him, but he is checked by Mucianus, 374, 377. Coolly treated by Vespasian, 382.
- Antonius Musa applies the water-cure successfully in the case of Augustus, but unsuccessfully in that of Marcellus, iv. 181.
- Antonius, C., uncle of the triumvir, impeached by Caesar, i. 96. Consul with Cicero, 115. Suspected of privy to Catilina's designs, 116. His tardy movements against Catilina, 131.
- Antonius, C., younger brother of the triumvir, commands the Caesarian forces in Illyricum, ii. 160. Defeated and goes over with all his forces into the service of the consuls, 170. His detachment added to the Pompeian forces, 189. Becomes praetor, iii. 18 *note*², 81. Declaration of Octavius made before him, 61. Shut up in Apollonia by Brutus, 109. Taken by Brutus, who spares his life, 158.
- Antonius, Julius, second son of the triumvir, married to Marcella, daughter of Octavia, iii. 271 *note*; iv. 136, 183 *note*¹. Put to death by Augustus for intriguing with Julia and for treason, 211. His name not erased from the Fasti, 212.
- Antonius, Lucius, brother of the triumvir, tribune, iii. 18 *note*², 81. His agrarian law, 52. Left by his brother to watch Mutina, 117. Becomes consul in a.c. 41, 178. Rises against Octavius, 178. Assumes the surname of Pietas, 178. Effects a combination against Augustus, 179. Is blockaded in Perusia, capitulates, and is spared, 179, 180.
- Antonius, M., son of Antonius and Fulvia, put to death, iii. 271.
- Antonius, M., Caesar's officer in Belgium, ii. 38. Questor, 76. Elected to a seat in the College of Augurs, 76. And tribune, 78. Flees to Ravenna, 82. Convoles a meeting of the senate, 123. In charge of Italy, 128, 170, 180, 183. Refuses to allow Cicero to leave Italy, 171. Cicero's scurrilous declamations against him, 172. Charged by Caesar with tardiness, 199. Prevents Libo from obtaining supplies, 200. Crosses the Adriatic with the second division, 204. Appointed master of the horse to Caesar, 270. Represses the intrigues of Dolabella, 270. His private irregularities, 270. Purchases Pompeius's house on the Palatine, 279. His resentment against Caesar, 347. Marries the notorious Fulvia, 347. Becomes consul, 365. Offers Caesar a diadem, 371. Said to have conspired against him, 374. His flight after Caesar's death, iii. 7. Obtains Caesar's papers and treasures, and combines with Lepidus, 15. Seizes the public treasure and convenes a meeting of the senate, 18, 19. Employs the people to overawe the senate, 22. Obtains the ratification of Caesar's acts, 22-24. His able use of his position, 25-32. Entertains the conspirator Cassius, 30. Reassures the senate of his moderation, 44. Accepts Dolabella as his colleague in the consulship, 45. His funeral oration over Caesar, 38, 39. Abolishes the dictatorship, 47. Puts the impostor Heliophanes to death, 49. Begins to use the authority of Caesar's papers for his own ends, 50. His connection with the forgeries of Faberius, 51. Secures his personal safety by means of a body-guard, 52. Obtains a new assignment of lands in Campania to the veterans, 53. His interview with Octavius, 62. Obtains Syria for Dolabella and Macedonia for himself, 69. His intrigues to get the Cisalpine from Decimus Brutus, and the legions destined for the Parthian war, 78, 79. Unpopular with the Caesarians, 79. His hollow reconciliation with Octavius, 79. Obtains from the people an exchange of provinces, 90. Attacked by Calpurnius Piso in the senate, 82. Invects against Cicero in the senate, 85. Replies to Cicero's first philippic, 87. His quarrel with Octavius, 89. His severities at Brundisium, 89. Returns to Rome and complains of Octavius to the senate, 92. Abandoned by two of his legions, who go over to Octavius, 92. Prepares to expel Decimus Brutus from the Cisalpine, 90-93. Cicero's second, third, fourth, and fifth philippics, 94, 100, 102. Bestrides Brutus in Mutina, 101-106. Commissioners sent to negotiate with him, 104. Who return with demands from him, 106. Union of the consuls with Octavius to relieve Decimus in Mutina, 114. Antonius's reply to Cicero's invectives, and Cicero's rejoinder, 115. Engages the forces of Pansa at Forum Gallorum, 116. Crosses the Alps, 123. Joins Lepidus, 125. His conference with Octavius and Lepidus, and formation of the second triumvirate, 137. Organizes with Octavius and Lepidus the proscription, 139, 140. Fixes the head and hands of Cicero on the Rostra, 147. His cruelty and that of his wife Fulvia, 155. Defeats Cassius at Philippi, 162-167. Sends the body of Brutus to Servilia, 170. Undertakes the subjugation of the eastern provinces, 172. His exactions in Asia Minor, 173. His first meeting with Cleopatra: follows her to Alexandria, 175, 176. Intrigues with Sextus Pompeius and Domitius against Octavius, 182. Death of his wife Fulvia, 183. His marriage with Octavia, 183. The eastern provinces and the

- Parthian war assigned to him, 185. Leaves Rome for the East, 189. Passes the winter in Athens, 190. His extravagant behaviour there, 190. Appears off Brundisium with three hundred sail, but forbidden by Octavius to land, 197. Furnishes Octavius with a hundred and thirty ships, 197. The triumvirate renewed for a second period of five years, 197. Leaves Octavia in Italy, 198. His renewed intimacy with Cleopatra, 211, 219, 220. His first expedition to Parthia, 221. Enters Media Atropatene, 221. His disastrous retreat, 222. Returns to Cleopatra, 223. Prepares for another expedition against the Parthians, 223. Men and money brought by his wife Octavia, 224. Antonius refuses to see her, 224. His triumph at Alexandria, and extravagant conduct there, 225, 229. His amicable relations with Octavius, 233. His final rupture with Octavius, 236. Their angry recriminations, 236. Courts the alliance of the king of Parthia, 236. Winters at Samos with Cleopatra, 238. Receives the fugitive consuls, and proclaims himself their protector, 240, 241. Divorces Octavia, 241, 243. Deserted by Plancus and Titius, who divulge the contents of his will, 241. Indignation of the Romans against him, 242. His preparation for war, 244. His armaments compared with those of Octavius, 245. His strong position at Actium, 247, 248. Prepares to engage the Octavians, 248. Defection among his officers and allies, 249. Determines, by Cleopatra's advice, to withdraw to Egypt, 250. His flight with Cleopatra to Alexandria, 253. Surrender of his army to Octavius, 256. Refused admission into Parionium, 260. His despair and revels at Alexandria, 262, 263. The society of "Inimitable Livers," 262. Challenges Octavius, 264. Mortally wounds himself on the false report of Cleopatra's death, and expires in her arms, 265. His royal obsequies and character, 274, 275. The "Loves of Antony and Cleopatra," 275, 276. His conduct in Palestine, 303-306.
- Antonius Saturninus, commander of the legions in Upper Germany, revolts against Domitian, is routed, and slain, vii. 96, 97.
- Antyllus, eldest son of M. Antonius and Fulvia, put to death, iii. 271.
- Appamea, city of, taken by C. Bassus, ii. 318. Its condition in the time of Augustus, iv. 860. Injured by an earthquake, v. 453. Its cause pleaded by young Nero, 453.
- Apaturus, a dancer, a favourite of Poppaea, vi. 206.
- Apleta, wife of Sejanus, discloses to Tiberius the story of the murder of Drusus, v. 281.
- Aps, oracle of, consulted by Germanicus, v. 65.
- Apococynthosia, "the Pumpkin-fest," Seneca's satire on Claudius, v. 463.
- Apollo, worship of, in Gaul, under the name of Belenus, i. 223. Temple of, of Augustus, on the Palatine hill, iv. 24. Silence of his oracle at Delphi ascribed to the wickedness of the Neronian age, vi. 197.
- Apollodorus, the architect, and the emperor Hadrian, story of, vii. 340.
- Apollonia, Caesar at, ii. 222, iii. 109.
- Apollonius of Tyana, a diviner and thaumaturge, vii. 112. Convicted of machinations against Domitian, and resides at Ephesus, 148. Assassination of Domitian revealed to him, 154. The life or romance of Apollonius by Philostratus, 365.
- Apologists, the Christian of the second century, vii. 368.
- Aponius, commands the republican insurgents in Spain, ii. 805.
- Appian, "The Queen of Ways," described, iv. 368, 369.
- Appian, the historian, compared with Plutarch, vii. 238.
- Appius Claudius, brother of P. Clodius, elected consul, i. 353. His venality and rigour as censor, ii. 73. Endeavours to expel Curio the younger from the senate, 74. Consults the oracle at Delphi, 217. His death, 218.
- Appius Silanus, head of the Junian house, destroyed by Messalina, v. 408.
- Appuleius, tribune of the people, defends Cicero iii. 116. Elected consul, 366.
- Apuleia lex de Majestate, v. 116.
- Apuleia Varilla, granddaughter of Octavia, found guilty of adultery and banished, v. 129.
- Apuleius, S., obtains the last triumph over the Iberians, iv. 65.
- Apulian mountains, character of the shepherds of the, i. 51, *note*.
- Aqua Marcia, description of the, iv. 365, 369.
- Aquæ Sextiæ (Aix), discovery of the medicinal springs at, and foundation of the Roman city, i. 196. The Teutones defeated by Marins near, 204.
- Aqueducts, seven at Rome in the reign of Augustus, iv. 365. Appia, 369. Crabra, 365, 379. Marcia, 365, 369, vi. 250.
- Aquillus, tribune, supports the opponents of Caesar, i. 343.
- Aquillus, how put to death by Mithridates, i. 43 *note*.
- Aquinus, M., joins the conspirators in the capitol, iii. 12.
- Aquitani, origin of the, i. 213. Their dwelling-place, 218. Submit to the Romans, 295, 296. Revolt, but chastised by Agrippa, iv. 70.
- Aquitania, existing monuments of Druidism in, i. 224. Campaign of P. Crassus in, 295.
- Arabia, expedition of Ælius Gallus into, iv. 97. Conquists in, by Cornelius Palma, vii. 201. Its commercial emporia long attached to the empire, 201.
- Araba, the, chastised by Gabinius, i. 350.
- Arar (Saône) river, i. 246.
- Archelaus, a competitor for the hand of Berenice, queen of Egypt, i. 351.
- Archelaus, made king of Cappadocia, by Marcus Antonius, iv. 111. His dominions enlarged by Augustus, 112. Founders the Cappadoceian Sebaste, 112. His death at Rome, v. 51. His kingdom formed into a Roman province, 51, 269.
- Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, has the kingdom of Judea, with Samaria and Idumæa, vii. 201.

- men, v. 269. Discontented with his portion, 269. His disgrace and banishment, 270.
- Architecture, domestic, of the Romans, iv. 390. Materials of which their houses were constructed, 390. Their style of temple architecture, 391. The two classes of dwellings, the domus and the insula, 391. The mansions of the nobles, 392. The cabins of the poorer citizens, 392.
- Arduenna, forest of, i. 403.
- Arduenna, a Gaulish deity; identified with Diana, iv. 84.
- Arecomici, a Belgic tribe, their territory, i. 227.
- Arelus, the Alexandrian philosopher, accompanies Octavius in his entry into Alexandria, iii. 266.
- Arelate, or Arelas (Arles), legions stationed at, ii. 63.
- Armenum (Arnheim?), on the old Rhine, vi. 449.
- Argiletum, the grove of, inhabited by artisans, iv. 382.
- Ariminum, its occupation by Caesar, a declaration of war, ii. 91. The three great converging roads to it, 100. Given up to the soldiers by the Triumvirs, iii. 140.
- Arriobarzanes II., king of Cappadocia, protected by Cicero, ii. 55. An ally of Pompeius, 188. Submits to Caesar, 265. His kingdom seized by Pharnaces, 265.
- Ariovistus, king of the Suevi, invited into Gaul by the Sequani, i. 232-234. Solicits the alliance of Rome, and receives the title of "Friend and Ally," 236. Demands lands from the Sequani, 237. His tyranny over the Gauls, 250. Refuses Caesar's terms, 256. Their conference, 260. Defeated and compelled to cross the Rhine, 261.
- Aristides, his apology for the Christians received by Hadrian, vii. 369.
- Aristo, Claudius, case of, vii. 216.
- Aristo, T., the juriconsult, causes of his suicide, vii. 268.
- Aristobulus, younger brother of Hyrcanus, assumes the title of king, i. 139. Deposed by Pompeius, 139.
- Aristobulus, son of Hyrcanus, the first to assume the title of king in Judea, iii. 298. Brought to Rome by Pompeius, 292. Poisoned, 301.
- Aristobulus, brother of Mariamne, drowned by Herod's contrivance, iii. 306.
- Aristobulus, son of Herod, his liberty obtained by his father, iv. 163. Put to death by his father, 216. His children in Rome, v. 276.
- Aristocracy, general result of the struggle between democracy and, v. 96. The balance trimmed by the tact of Augustus, 96. More logical character of the policy of Tacitus, 98.
- Armenia, war of Lucullus with, i. 417. Attacked by M. Antonius, iii. 225. Part of it ceded to Parthia, iii. 237. Under the protection of Rome, iv. 117. Affairs of Armenia in B.C. 6-1, 218. And in A.D. 18, v. 68. Receives a king from Germanicus, 68. Its condition at the close of the reign of Augustus, 268. Invaded by the Parthians, and defended by Corbulo, vi. 265. Its king, Tiridates, does homage to Nero, 268; vii. 297. Interference of the Parthians with Armenia, 297. Declared by Trajan the vassal of Rome, 298. Trajan's expedition into, 300. Both the Armenians annexed to the Roman empire, 300, 303. Relinquished by Hadrian, 313. Protected from Parthia by Antoninus Pius, 401. Revival of the Parthian claims, 457. Rescued by the generals of M. Aurelius, who assumes the title of Armenicus, 457.
- Arminius, the Cheruscan, educated at Rome, iv. 271. Devotes himself to the liberation of Germany, 271. Destroys Varus and three legions, 272-274. Boastful bragging, v. 32. Attacked by the Romans under Germanicus, 33. His unsuccessful attack on Cereia, 34. His parley with his brother Flavus, 38. Defeated by Germanicus, 41, 42. His war with the Suevi and Marcomanni, 53, 54. Defeats Maroboduus, 54. His death and character, 55.
- Armenia, the first known inhabitants of, i. 217. Close union of its tribes, and their affinity with those of the northern coast of Gaul, i. 218. Subjugated, but again rebel against Rome, 280. Dispersed, 306. Held in check by Darius the Persian, ii. 87. Becomes a portion of the Lugdunensis, iv. 76.
- Arms, improved, introduced by Caninius, i. 189.
- Army; the command of the national army retained by the nobles, i. 86. Abolition of the property qualification of recruits, 87 *note*. Readiness of the settled veterans of Sulla for tumult and revolt, 88. Panic in Caesar's army in Gaul, 257. Composition of Caesar's legions, 263. Comparison between Romans and Gauls as soldiers, 282. The Roman method of fighting, 284. Composition of Caesar's legions, 3, 63, 69. Mutiny among his soldiers at Placentia, 176. Careful training of the Roman soldier, 219. The Roman body armour, 265. Disaffection of Caesar's veterans in Campania, 271-282. The mutiny quelled, 282. Decay of military discipline among the Romans, 423. The military oath of obedience taken to the emperor as general of the armies, iii. 851. Establishment of a Roman standing army, 411. The emperor's body-guard and garrison of the city, 412. Pay and length of service of the legionaries, 414. Members of the imperial military establishment, 415. Limits of military service determined by Augustus, iv. 161. Troops and fortifications by which the Pax Romana was secured, 345. Discontent of the legions in Pannonia, v. 18. Drums sent to quell the mutiny, 19. Mutiny among the legions on the Rhine, 20. Quelled by Germanicus, 21. Stations of the legions under Tiberius, 142. The urban and praetorian cohorts, 143. The discipline of the legions strenuously maintained by Tiberius, 143. Stations of the presidial legions in Britain, vi. 40. Mode of raising and pay of the legionaries and of the praetorian cohorts, 257, 258. Atti-

- tude of the legions and their chiefs in the provinces at the commencement of the reign of Galba, 296. Discharge of the prætorians and disposal of the Othonian legions by Vitellus, 343. Military disturbance at Ticinum, 344. Reëmbodiment of the prætorian and urban guards, 354. Mutiny on the Rhine, and break-up of a Roman army, 398. Favour shown by Domitian to the army, vii. 131. Doubtful attitude of the legions at the accession of Nerva, 161. The tone of society corrupted by the soldiery in the reign of Trajan, 261. The discipline of the army maintained by Hadrian, 342. State of the prætorians and of the regular army during the Flavian era, 442. Mercenary character of the regular army, 443. Relaxation of discipline, 443. Emoluments of service, 443. Permanence of the constitution of the legion, 444. Roman system of defence, 445. Anxiety of the emperors generally to repress the military spirit of the soldiery, 447. The emperors the champions of the army, and the senate finally overpowered by the soldiers, 448. Pestilence spread by the army on its return from the East, 461.
- Arecomici**, akin to the Belgæ, i. 227.
- Arretium**, seized by M. Antonius for Cæsar, ii. 100. Held for Augustus, iii. 93.
- Arria**, the elder, and Pætus, story of, v. 411; vi. 172.
- Arria**, the younger, her suicide, vi. 172; vii. 396. Commended by Pliny, 253.
- Arria**, mother of M. Antonius, vii. 396.
- Aruntius**, L., designated by Augustus as a possible competitor for the empire, v. 10. His history and death, 242, 244.
- Araces**, founder of a race of Parthian kings, i. 408.
- Arscidae**, foundation of the dynasty of the, i. 408. Obnoxious to their Persian subjects, 410.
- Arsmoe**, sister of Cleopatra, aspires to the throne, ii. 258-260. Induces Ganymedes to assassinate Achilles, 260. Taken prisoner by Cæsar, 263. Led in triumph by him, 310. Put to death by Antonius, iii. 175, 176.
- Artabanus**, seizes the throne of Armenia, v. 268. Compelled to flee into Hyrcania, but subsequently restored, 268.
- Artabazes**, or Artavasdes, king of Armenia, his advice to Crassus slighted, i. 417, 420. Attacked by Orodes, king of Parthia, 422. Denounced by Crassus as a traitor, 422. Comes to terms with Orodes, 429. His daughter marries the Parthian Pacorus, 429. Disaffected to Rome, ii. 55. Deserts Antonius in Media, iii. 221. Revenge planned by Antonius, 223. Surrenders to Antonius, and led in chains through Alexandria, 225. Put to death by Cleopatra, 269.
- Artavasdes**, king of Media Atropatene, beleaguered in Praaspa by Antonius, iii. 222. Reconciled with Antonius, 223. Obtains from him a share of Armenia, and furnishes him with cavalry, 235. His daughter Jotape betrothed to Alexander, son of Antonius and Cleopatra, 237.
- Artaxata**, capital of Media, on the Araxes, iii. 225. Burnt by Corbulo, vi. 265. Taken by Statius Priscus, vii. 456.
- Artaxias**, son of the Armenian Artavasdes, massacres all the Romans in his kingdom, iv. 117. Puts himself under the protection of Parthia, and murdered by his subjects, 117.
- Artemidorus**, the philosopher, banished, vii. 148.
- Artemion**, leads a sanguinary revolt of the Jews in Cyprus, vii. 309.
- Artemis**, temple of, at Ephesus, its privileges of sanctuary, iv. 106.
- Arulenus Rusticus** hunted to death, vii. 147.
- Arverni**, the, defeated by Fabius Maximus, i. 196. Treated with consideration, 197. The head of the great confederation of the Galli, 214. Their dwelling-place, 214. Lose their ascendancy, 233, 216. Join the league of Vercingetorix, ii. 13. Invasion of their territory by Cæsar, 16, 19. Suspends Cæsar's sword in one of their temples, but are defeated by him, 23, 29. Arvernian prisoners liberated by Cæsar, 34.
- Arx**, the, or citadel, of Rome, iv. 376.
- Ascalon**, its Greek writers, iii. 294.
- Asclurgium**, taken by Civilis, vi. 895.
- Asconius Labeo**, Nero's guardian, vi. 84.
- Asculum**, taken by Cæsar, ii. 103.
- Asia**, province of, 184. The political organization of the region of Lower Asia, iv. 104. This province the earliest acquisition of the republic east of the Ægean, 105. Its extent, division into regions and conventus, 105. Arrangements of Augustus for its government, 106. Its vassal kings, and their subservience to the chiefs of the Roman state, 109. Population of the Roman provinces of Asia, 341. State of the cities of Asia, Greek and Macedonia, in the time of Augustus, 360-362. Eleven cities of Asia contend for the honor of making Tiberius their tutelary divinity, v. 193.
- Asclaticus**, freedman of Vitellius, vi. 854. Crucified, 376.
- Asclaticus Valerius**. See Valerius.
- Asinius Gallus**, son of Asinius Pollio, designated by Augustus as a possible competitor for the empire, v. 10. His question to Tiberius in the senate, 16. Marries Vipsania, the divorced wife of Tiberius, 217. Cruelly treated by Tiberius, 213.
- Asinius Gallus**, son of the above, his abortive attempt on the life of Claudius, v. 411 note 2.
- Asinius Pollio**. See Pollio.
- Asmonean family**, cut off by Herod, iii. 805.
- Aspasius**, the sophist, his teaching at Athens, vii. 361.
- Asprenas** prevents Arminius from crossing the Rhine, iv. 275.
- Assassination**, prevalence and publicity of, in Italy, ii. 382.
- Assyria**, the new province of, created by Trajan, vii. 805. Abandoned by Hadrian, 332 note 1.
- Astura**, a maritime residence of Cicero, iii. 145.
- Astures**, a Spanish tribe, i. 155.
- Astarte**, the Syrian goddess, worshipped at

- Rome, vi. 200. Her rites described, 202. Honored and then condemned by Nero, 250.
- Astrologers expelled from Italy by Tiberius, v. 149. And by Vitellius, vi. 342. Domitian's edicts against them, vii. 111.
- Asylum, right of, limited by Tiberius, v. 151.
- Ateius, tribune, i. 342. Violence of his colleague, Trebonius, 343. His imprecations upon Crassus as he quits Rome, 413.
- Athenæum, the, established by Hadrian at Rome, vii. 381.
- Athens, submits to the Caesarians under the Calenus, ii. 252. Extravagant behaviour of M. Antonius at, iii. 190. Mulcted of its privileges by Augustus, iv. 103. Its condition in the time of Augustus, 354. Its inhabitants debased in blood, 354. Its architectural splendour, 356. Its university, professors, and philosophers, 357. Nero shrinks from visiting it, vi. 273. Visited and embellished by Hadrian, vii. 352, 354. Its appearance and contrast of its public and private buildings in the time of Hadrian, 355. The university of the Roman world, 358. Conservative character of its university, 359. Its professional system described, 360. The sophists and their teaching, 361. The Christians at Athens, 368. Dissatisfaction of Hadrian with the conservative spirit of the university, 370.
- Atia, her letters to her son Octavius, iii. 55.
- Atra, city of the sun, unsuccessfully besieged by Trajan, vii. 307, 308.
- Atreates, a Belgian tribe, join the confederacy against the Romans, i. 267. Defeated by Caesar, 274.
- Atthianus, guardian of Hadrian, vii. 324. Appointed praetorian prefect, 341.
- Atticus, T. Pomponius, his character, i. 315, 316.
- Attilius, the "Electra" of, performed at Caesar's funeral, iii. 87.
- Attilius, a senator who conspired against Antoninus Pius, condemned by the senate, vii. 399.
- Attius Varus, a Pompeian, ii. 102.
- Attius Rufus accuses Afranius of treachery in Spain, ii. 225.
- Attuarii, a German tribe, submit to Tiberius, iv. 237.
- Audasius, his plot to carry off Agrippa Posthumus and Julia from their places of exile, iv. 256.
- Auditorium, the, of the emperor, described, vii. 433.
- Auiflens, settlement of the Roman colony of, ii. 328, 329.
- Augury, Etruscan, ii. 895. The science cultivated by the Romans, 895, 896. Duties of the augurs, iii. 371.
- Augusta Praetoria (Aosta), military colony of, founded by Augustus at, iv. 89. His triumphal arch at, 89.
- Augusta Treverorum (Trevès), colony of, founded by Galba, vi. 387.
- Augusta Vindelicorum (Augsburg), foundation of, iv. 177.
- Augusta, the title of, conferred on Livia, v. 13.
- Augustales, a college of priests established in honor of Augustus, iv. 79.
- Augustalia, establishment of the festival of the, iii. 369.
- Augustus (at first Octavius), son of C. Octavius and Atia, and niece of Julius Caesar, his birth, ii. 367. His education superintended by his mother, by his step-father, L. Marcus Philippus, and by Caesar, who adopts him, ii. 367. His delicate health and personal beauty, 368. Sent to Apollonia in Hydruntum to prosecute his studies, and raised to patrician rank, 368. Declared in Caesar's will his principal heir and adopted son, iii. 32, 33. Returns to Italy on the news of Caesar's death, claims his inheritance, and assumes the name of C. Julius Caesar Octavianus, 36. Is warmly received by the veterans, and makes a favorable impression on Cicero, 37, 38. Enters Rome, 39. Effect of the omens which are said to have accompanied his career, 39, 60. Courts the senate, and pledges himself to discharge Caesar's bequests, 61. His harangue to the people, 61. His first interview with Antonius, who withholds from him his inheritance, 62. Raises the money and pays Caesar's legacies, 62. Exhibits the shows vowed by Caesar to Venus the Ancestress, 63. His popularity, 64. He claims and is refused by Antonius the throne and crown decreed by the senate to his adopting father, 64. Blows aimed by him at the popularity of Antonius, 70. Their hollow reconciliation, 70. His quarrel with Antonius, 89. Octavius collects troops and quarters them at Arretium, 89. Complaint of Antonius against him, 92. Two of the Antonian legions go over to him, 92. His armaments, 93. Atia declares for him and his party increases, 94. Cicero's mistaken estimate of him, 97. Offers to defend Decimus Brutus against Antonius, 101. Hesitation of the senate to accept his aid, 102. Places himself under the command of Horatius, 105. Posted at Forum Corneli, 108. Demands of the senate authorization to attack Antonius as a public enemy, 114. The senate cajole him with titles, but withhold their assent, 114. He carries off the dead body of Hirtius, 119. Suspected by Decimus Brutus, 123. Declines to pursue Antonius, 125. Remains at Mutina, 126. Complaints of Plancus against him, 127. All hope from him abandoned by Cicero, 127. Contradictorily treated by the senate, 128. Demands the consulship, 130. Offers to combine with Lepidus and Antonius, 131. Marches on Rome, and compels the senate to declare him consul with his cousin Pedius, 131, 132. Leaves Rome and opens negotiations with Antonius and Lepidus, 134. Formation of the second triumvirate, 137. The government of Sicily, Sardinia, and Africa, with three legions allotted to him, 138. The proscription, 139. Abandons Cicero to Antonius, 139, 140. espouses Clodia, daughter of P. Clodius and Fulvia, 140. His lenity in favourable contrast with his

colleagues' corruption or cruelty, 154. Resigns the consulship to Ventidius, 156. Arms against Sextus Pompeius, but finds himself unable to cope with him at sea, 161. Joins Antonius in the East, 161. His sickness at Dyrrachium, 162. His camp at Philippi stormed by Brutus, 167. Retires to Italy after the victory at Philippi, 171. Confiscates lands in Italy to satisfy the legionaries, 170. Combination formed by L. Antonius against him, 179. Recalls Salvidienus from Spain with six legions, 179. Besieges Perusia, 180. Idle report of his offering three hundred prisoners at Perusia to the shade of Cæsar, 180. His apprehension of another civil war, 182. The soldiers compel him and Antonius to come to an accommodation, 182. Divorces Clodia and marries Scribonia, 183. Gives his sister in marriage to Antonius, 183. Treaty of Misenum, between Sextus Pompeius and the Triumvirs, 187. Octavius repairs to Gaul, 189. Renewal of the war with Sextus Pompeius, 192. Misfortunes of Octavius at sea, 194, 198, 200. Treaty of Tarentum, and renewal of the triumvirate for five years, 197. End of the naval war with Sextus, 201. Octavius defeats Lepidus, but spares his life, 203. Becomes the head of the Cæsarian or Marian interest, 206. His increasing popularity, 207. Restores order at Rome, 207. His ministers Agrippa, Mæcenas, and Messala, 211-217. His matrimonial alliances, 217. Divorces Scribonia and marries Livia Drusilla, 217, 218. His popularity in Rome, 222. His campaigns against the Salassians, Pannonians and Dalmatians restore his military reputation, 232, 233. His amicable relations with Antonius, 233. Their rupture and mutual recriminations, 236. Octavius declares war against Cleopatra, 242. His preparations, 244. Assumes the consulship with his friend Messala, and resigns the triumvirate, 244. His armaments compared with those of Antonius, 245. Crosses the Ionian gulf, 246. Takes Coreyra, 247. Leads a squadron at the battle of Actium, 251. The victory at Actium as described by the Augustan poets, 253. Nicopolis founded by Octavius in commemoration of it, 257. His treatment of the captives of Actium, 257. Lands in Egypt, 263. Refuses the challenge of Antonius to single combat, 264. Enters Alexandria, 266. His interview with Cleopatra, 267, 268. Puts Cæsarian and others to death, but thenceforward is remarkable for clemency, 270-272. Reduces Egypt to the form of a province under his own direct control, 279. Visits the tomb of Alexander, but declines seeing the remains of the Ptolemies, 280, 284. Settles the affairs of Parthia and Judea, 284. Confirms Herod in his kingdom, 287. Tacitus's review of the position of Octavius after the close of the civil wars, 310. Puts Lepidus, son of the ex-triumvir, to death, 312. Enters on his fifth consulship in Asia, 313. His reception in Rome, 313. His triple triumph, 314. His

dedication of temples, games and spectacles, and opening of the Julian basilica, 314, 315. Divine honours paid to him, 319. Closes the temple of Janus, 321. Surveys his position, 323. Pretended debate between him and Agrippa and Mæcenas whether he should resign the supreme power, 323. Assumes the prefix of Imperator, declines the title but accepts the substance of the censorship, and revises the senatorian roll, 324-327; iv. 141. Regarded as the fountain of honour, iii. 327. Takes a census of the Roman people, 323. Agrippa, his colleague in the censorship, confers on Octavius the title of *Princeps*, 329. His liberal and magnanimous conduct, 329, 330. Consecrates the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, 330. Repetition of his offer to lay down the Imperium, 331-333. Resumes it for ten years (Decennium I.) with proconsular power, and divides the provinces between himself and the senate, 334. Takes the title of Augustus, 335. His reasons for preferring it to that of Quirinus, Romulus, or any recognized designation of sovereign rule, 335. Quits Rome and visits the provinces, 336. Released by the senate from the provisions of the *Lex Cincia de Muneribus*, 337, 338. His relations released from those of the *Lex annalis*, 338. Question of the succession during his dangerous sickness in Spain, 338. Delivers his signet ring to Agrippa, 341. Recovers, declines the consulship, and accepts the *potestas tribunitia*, 341. Review of the imperial government as organized by him, 343-358. Importance of the title *Princeps Senatus* to Augustus, 353. His numerous consulships, 353, 359. Declines the office after B. C. 23, 359. Receives proconsular authority throughout the empire, and the *potestas tribunitia* for life, 359-361. Import of these functions, 362; iv. 169. Conspiracies of Murena and Cæpio against his life, iii. 367. He retires and refuses to return to Rome for a time, 367; iv. 170. Accepts the *potestas consularis*, iii. 369; iv. 174. And the supreme pontificate, iii. 371. The name of the month Sextilis changed to that of Augustus, 373; iv. 190. Legislative and judicial functions of Augustus examined, his edicts, rescripts, and constitutions, iii. 376-378. The import of the term *legibus solutus* and *Lex Regia*, 379-382. Perpetuation of the title of Cæsar, 383, 384. Review of the imperial administration, 385. Augustus affects to maintain the estimation of Roman citizenship, 390. Maintains the dignity of the senatorian order, 393. Revives the office of prefect of the city, 402; iv. 145. His body-guard, city-garrison, and *vigiles* or the watch, iii. 412, 413. His military establishment, 415. His navy, 416. Character of his sovereignty, 426-429. Monarchy manifestly indispensable in his time, 428. Attempts to revive a religious feeling among the Romans, iv. 18-27. His restoration of the temples, 24. His laws for enforcing marriage, 83. His regulations for the dis-

tion of classes, 41. His restrictions on the manumission of slaves, 42. His jurisprudence, 43. Review of his policy, 44-47. Congratulates himself on the accomplishment of his patriotic schemes, 47. Moderation in his personal habits, 50-52. His demeanor at the theatre and circus, 53. Receives the title of *Pater Patriæ*, 53, 147, 209. His organization of the provinces, 60, *et seq.* Pacifies the province of Spain, 62. His military operations and sickness, 63. His policy in the organization of Gaul, 72. His encampments on the left bank of the Rhine, 81. Discountenances the Druids, 83. Introduces the Roman polytheism into Gaul, 84. Worshipped by the Gauls, 84. Satisfied with the promise of tribute from the Britons, 85. Progress of the Roman arms in Mæsia and Thrace, 89. Gives the kingdom of Mauretania to Juba, king of Numidia, 91. His organization of the province of Africa, 92. And of the Cyrenaica, 93. Sends an expedition against the Arabians, 97. Releases the Ethiopians from an annual tribute, 103. His progress in the East, 103. Metes compensation or retribution to the cities of Asia, 106. Returns to Samos, 117. Account of the members of the Caesarian family, 124-128. Sends Agrippa on a mission to the East, 129. Augustus's illness and recovery, 129, 130. Again accepts the tribunitian power, 130. Pronounces the funeral oration of Marcellus, 133. His uneasy relations with Agrippa, 134-137. Returns to Rome, 138. Augustus's illness and recovery, 139, 140. Again accepts the tribunitian power, 140. Pronounces the funeral oration of Marcellus, 133. His uneasy relations with Agrippa, 134-137. Returns to Rome, 138. His legislation, 141. Accepts the Imperium for five years, 142. His *Lex Sacularis*, 143. Formally institutes the prefecture of the city, 143. And of a "Council of State," 146. Studious moderation of his demeanour, 147. Freedom of his counsellor Maecenas, 149. Augustus represents conservatism. Maecenas progress, 151. Augustus adopts Calus and Lucius, the sons of Agrippa by Julia, 155. In Gaul, summoned by the disaster of Lollius, and the oppressions of Licinus, 156-158. Receives the submission of the Cantabrians, 161. Returns to Rome, 161. Becomes chief pontiff on the death of Lepidus, 165. Pronounces the funeral oration over the body of Agrippa, 166. Begins the custom of sitting one day in the year in the garb of a mendicant, 184. Supposed cause of this observance, 184. Pronounces the funeral oration over Octavia, 186. And over Drusus Nero, 186. Third decennial term of the Imperium, 188. Takes up his residence at Lugdunum, 188. His treachery to the German hostages there, 189. His affection for his daughter Julia, 202. Education of Calus and Lucius, 205. Introduces Calus to the people, 206. His indignation at the discovery of his daughter and granddaughter Julia's profligacy, 210, 257. Deaths of Lucius and Calus Caesar, 217, 219. His book of letters addressed to his grandson Calus, 219. Recalls and adopts Tiberius, and invests him with the tribunitian power for five years, 221. His continued labours,

221. Conspiracy of Cinna, 222. Clemency of Augustus, 224. Reflections on the story, 226. Private life and habits of Augustus, 226-228. His taste and literary style, 228. Addicted to superstition, 230. His good humour and gentleness, 231. His hesitation in the prosecution of the war in Germany, 241. His alarm at the outbreak of the Panonian and Dalmatian war, 248. Banishes Agrippa Postumus, 252, 254. His family solitude and increasing cares, 255. Fresh conspiracies against him, 256. Banishes his granddaughter Julia, 257. And Ovid, 257-262. His distress at the loss of Varus and his legions, 278. His splendid conduct, 275-278. Begins to retire from public life, 279. His reported visit to Agrippa Postumus in banishment, 291. His last census, 284. His valedictory *adieu*, 283 *note*. His Monumentum Ancyranum, 284, 285. His last days, 285. Calmness with which he contemplates the approach of death, 286. Contracts a dysentery at Astura, 286. His last moments, 288. His death, 288. Effect of *suavitas* upon his character, 289. His enthusiasm and belief in his own divinity, 289. Consoling reflections on his life, 291. Panegyric of Philo upon him, 291 *note*. His palace on the Palatine Hill, 373. His will, v. 13, 14. His last public counsels, 14. Funeral honours decreed him, 15. Comparison between him and Tiberius, 162. Augustus, a band of young nobles enrolled to applaud Nero, v. 106; vi. 278. Augustodunum, "Hill of Augustus" (Autun), its name changed from Bibracte to, iv. 78. The literary metropolis of Gaul, 82. The school founded there by Augustus, 82. Revolt of the Gauls in, v. 169, 170. One of the centres of Druidism, vi. 10. Augustus, the name of the month Sextilis changed to, iii. 373; iv. 130. Aulerci, a Gallic tribe, i. 281. Compelled to maintain Caesar's soldiers, 297, ii. 13. Aulus Persius. See Persius. Aulus Plautus, his campaigns in Britain, and recall, vi. 22-28. Honoured with the greater triumph, v. 421. Story of his wife, Pomponia Gracina, vi. 215. Auranis annexed by Augustus to the proconsulate of Syria, iv. 114. Aurelia, mother of Caesar, a matron of the ancient stamp, i. 147, 318. Instructs him in the rudiments of the Roman tongue, vi. 57. Aurelian Road, the route of the Roman armies into Gaul, i. 287. Extended under the name of *Juliana* from Cisalpine to Transalpine Gaul, iv. 87. Aurelius Cotta, uncle of Julius Caesar, his measure for distributing the *judicia* among the senators, knights, and ærarian tribunes, i. 190. Aurelius Fulvus, father and grandfather of Antoninus Pius, vii. 395. Aurelius M. Antoninus (born M. Annius Verus), son of Hadrian's sister, adopted by Antoninus Pius, vii. 389. Marries Annia Faustina, 396-409. His early years

- and promise, 410. His personal appearance, 451. Associates Verus in the empire, 451. Disturbances in his reign, 453. Reverses in the East, 455. Triumphs with Verus, 457. His deference to the senate, and wise choice of ministers, 458-460. Alarmed at the inroads of the barbarians on the Danube, 460. Depopulation of the empire by the *pestis Antonina*, 461, 462. His wars with the Quadi and Marcomanni, 464, 465. Sole emperor on the death of Verus, 465. His victory over the Quadi on the Danube, 466, 467. His domestic troubles, 468, 469. His generous behaviour to Avidius Cassius, 469-471. Repairs to Syria, 472. At Alexandria, 473. Death of Faustina, 472. His triumph over the Sarmatians, 473. His last expedition against the Marcomanni, his victory, illness, and death, 474, 475. Reflections on his death, 476. Compared with Alfred the Great, 477. Symptoms of decline throughout the empire at this time, 479. Decrease in population, 480. Effects of slavery, 481. His probable motives for persecuting the Christians, 488. His "Meditations" or "Commentaries," their melancholy tone, 490-495. His statue on the Campidoglio, 450.
- Autronius**, the consul, convicted of bribery, i. 114. Joins Catilina's conspiracy, 116, 117.
- Auximum**, declares for, and is occupied by, Cæsar, ii. 100, 101.
- Avaricum**, capital of the Arverni, besieged and taken by Cæsar, ii. 16-18. Spared by Vercingetorix, 17.
- Aventine Hill**, contrast between it and the Palatine, as sites for a city, i. 18. Distinct from the other seven hills of Rome, iv. 869. Described, 878. Ravaged by the great fire of Rome, vi. 181.
- Avernus**, Lake, navigable canal from it to Rome, projected by Nero, vi. 141.
- Avidius Cassius**. *See* Cassius.
- Avilius Flævus**, prefect of Egypt. *See* Flævus.
- BÆTICA**, a senatorian province, its schools and learned men, iv. 68.
- Bale**, life of the Romans at, iv. 364. Cæsar's bridge of boats across the bay, v. 332.
- Balbus**, L. Cornelius, Cæsar's friend and steward, his rise, position, and character, ii. 250, 351. Refuses a token of respect to Augustus, iv. 161.
- Balbus**, Octavius, joins the conspirators after Cæsar's murder, iii. 12.
- Barcochebas**, the Jewish leader, legends respecting him, vii. 316. Nominated to the chieftainship of the Jewish people, 317. His struggle with the Romans, defeat, and death, 317, 318.
- Basilius**, L. Minucius, lieutenant of Cæsar in Gaul, i. 409. Joins the conspiracy against Cæsar's life, ii. 374. Cæsar's letter to, on Cæsar's assassination, iii. 25. Killed by his own slaves, 330.
- Basus**, Cæcilius, a Pompeian, maintains the senatorian cause in Syria, ii. 318, iii. 98. Takes the city of Apamea, ii. 318. His soldiers go over to Cassius, iii. 109, 159. Dismissed unpunished by Cassius, 159.
- Bassus**, Cesellius, his pretended discovery of the treasures of Dido, vi. 154.
- Bassus**, Roman governor at Alexandria, v. 311.
- Batavi**, the, serve as cavalry in the Roman armies, iv. 266. Their island described, vi. 385. Their skill in riding and swimming on horseback, and their usefulness as auxiliaries, 385. Their revolt under Claudius Civilis, their chief, 386 *et seq.* The island occupied by the Romans, 410.
- Baths**, fondness of the Romans for, iv. 419. Baths of Mæcenas and Agrippa, and manners at them, 419.
- Baths of Titus**, vii. 32-34. Of Nero, 38 *note*. Of Caracalla, Diocletian, and Constantine, 33.
- Batiatus**, escape of his gladiators at Capua, i. 50.
- Bato**, the Dalmatian, heads a revolt against the Romans, but is defeated by Cæcina, iv. 247. His answer to Tiberius, 255.
- Bato**, the Pannonian chief, attempts to carry the post of Sirmium, iv. 247. Betrays his colleague Pinnes, and chased by the Romans from post to post, 255.
- Bedriacum**, first battle at, vi. 334. Second, 337. Vitellius's brutality on the field, 345.
- Belenus**, the Gallic Apollo, i. 224. Admitted to the citizenship of the Roman Olympus, iv. 84.
- Belgae**, difference in Cæsar's and Strabo's account of them, i. 215. Type of the Belgæ, 217. The Belgians and Celts intermixed with Teutonic tribes, 225. Their character and mode of life, 226. Some of their tribes penetrate into the south of Gaul, 226. Combine against Rome, and are defeated, 267-270. Submit to Cæsar, 281. Their territories invaded by the Germans, 366. The latest settlers in Britain, 377. Revolt of the Belgians, 391. Besiege Q. Cicero, 394. And T. Labienus, but their confederacy dissolved, 397, 398. Revolt of the Belgæ, but suppressed, v. 168. Dissatisfaction of the Belgic tribes, vi. 387.
- Bellisana**, a Gaulish deity, identified with Minerva, iv. 84.
- Bellienus**, his house burnt at Cæsar's funeral, iii. 42.
- Bellovaci**, a Belgian tribe, joins the confederacy against the Romans, i. 267. Their relations with Britain and submission to Cæsar, 271. Defeated and submit again to Cæsar, ii. 36. An insurrection of, repressed by D. Brutus, 318. Reduced by Brutus, iv. 70.
- Beneventum**, given up to the soldiers by Augustus, iii. 140.
- Berenice**, daughter of Ptolemaeus Auletes, placed on the throne of Egypt by the populace of Alexandria, i. 860. Married to Seleucus, but strangles him, 351. Put to death by her father, 352.
- Berenice**, mother of Herod Agrippa, at Rome, with her children, v. 276.
- Berenice**, queen of Chalcis, intrigues with Vespasian, vi. 360. Married to her uncle Herodes, 419.

- Berenice, sister of Agrippa, her relations to Titus and dismissal by him, vi. 419, 496; vii. 43, 45.
- Berieus, a British chieftain, applies to Claudius for aid, vi. 20. *The Verie* of the British coins (?), 20 *note* 1.
- Berytus (Beirut), colony of, founded by Agrippa, iv. 162 *note* 1.
- Bessi, a Thracian tribe, plundered by M. Brutus, iii. 153.
- Bestia joins Catiline's conspiracy, i. 116.
- Bethar, the last stronghold of the Jews, vii. 317. Stormed and taken by Julius Severus, 318.
- Betius Chilo, his pretensions to the empire, vi. 295.
- Bibracte, or Bibrax (Autun), its freedom and commerce, i. 220. Capital of the *Ædul* (Rami), 214, 259, 268. Caesar in, 259. Besieged by the *Succiones* and *Belgæ*, 268. Gaulish confederacy assembled at, ii. 27. Its name changed to *Augustodunum*, iv. 78.
- Bibroci, a British tribe, submit to Caesar, i. 388.
- Bibulus, L., surrenders to Antonius, iii. 172.
- Bibulus, M. Calpurnius, *adile*, i. 163. *Prætor*, 134. *Consul*, 170. With *Cæsar*, violently opposed to his colleague *Cæsar*, 172-173. His opinion on the commissioners to Egypt, 329, 350. Votes for appointing *Pompeius* sole *consul*, 438. *Proconsul* of Syria, ii. 34. Commands the senatorian fleet, 169, 189. Prevents the passage of the *Cæsarians*, 196, 197. His death, 198.
- Bibulis, *Martial's* native city, vii. 202.
- Biography, Roman; the writings of *Tacitus* more biographical than historical, vii. 244. Preference of the Romans for biography, 248. The biographies of *Suetonius*, 243-248.
- Bitterae, Roman colony in Gaul, i. 205, 213.
- Bithynicus, *proprætor* of Sicily, surrenders to *Sextus Pompeius*, iii. 160.
- Bithynia, attempts of *Mithridates* to gain possession of, i. 42. Governed by *Cimber*, iii. 31. Ceded to Rome by *Nicomedes*, iv. 105. Extended by *Pompeius*, and governed by *pro-consuls* under the empire, 105, 106. *Pliny's* administration, vii. 214, 289. The number of *Christians* in Bithynia, and *Pliny's* proceedings against them, 289-291.
- Bituriges, their league with *Dumnorix* and the *Helvetii*, i. 250. Invasion of their country by *Cæsar*, ii. 16. Who besieges and takes their capital city, *Avaricum*, 16-18.
- Bituitus, or Bittus, king of the *Arverni*, sent a prisoner to Rome, i. 196. His barbaric splendour, 214 *note* 2.
- Blæus, *Junius*, mutiny of the legions under his command in Pannonia, v. 18. The mutiny quelled by *Drusus*, 19. *Blæus* chosen *proconsul* of Africa, 167. Punished as a friend of *Sejanus*, 229. Poisoned by *Vitellius*, vi. 358.
- Boadicea, queen of the *Iceni*, indignities to which she and her children were subjected, vi. 44. Sacks the Roman colony of *Camulodunum*, 46. Defeated by *Suetonius*, 48, 49. Commits suicide, 49.
- Boecus, king of Mauretania, prepares to aid the *Cæsarians*, ii. 289. His death, iii. 295.
- Bodugatus, chieftain of the *Nervi*, opposed to *Cæsar*, i. 273.
- Boduni, a British tribe, submit to the Romans, vi. 22.
- Bogudes, king of Mauretania, ii. 289.
- Boli, defeated at the *Vadimonian Lake*, i. 191. Migrate to the banks of the *Danube*, 192. Friends of the *Atani*, 396; ii. 15. Allowed to remain in Gaul, i. 256. Attacked by the *Gauls*, ii. 15.
- Bolani, *Vettius*, his prefecture of Britain, vii. 59.
- Bolgæ, tribes of the, i. 227.
- Bona Dea, the mysteries of, profaned by *Clodius*, i. 147.
- Bononia, meeting of the *Triumvirs* at, iii. 187. *Nero* pleads for the distressed inhabitants of v. 452.
- Books, production and cost of, in Rome. See *Literature*.
- Bosphorus, *Agrippa's* settlement of the affairs of the Kingdom of the, iv. 163. Given to *Mithridates*, v. 380.
- Bovianum, settlement of the Roman colony of, i. 328.
- Bratespantium, principal fortress of the *Bellocæ*, surrenders to *Cæsar*, i. 271.
- Brenni, the, compared by *Drusus*, iv. 164.
- Brennus at Rome, i. 187.
- Breviarium Imperii of Augustus described, iv. 328.
- Brigantium, in Galicia, reduced by *Cæsar*, i. 156.
- Britain, early inhabitants of, i. 227. First mentioned in Roman history, 269. Account of them by the *Gauls*, 275. *Cæsar's* first invasion of Britain, 357-381. His fleet injured by a high tide, 383. His army harassed by the *Britons*, 382. Returns to Gaul, 382. Expedition at Rome at his British expedition, 383. The mines and pearls of Britain, 385. *Cæsar's* preparations for a second invasion, 384. His landing, 386. Resistance of the *Britons* under *Cassivelaunus*, 387. *Cæsar's* partial successes, and return to Gaul, 388, 389. *Augustus* contented with a promise of tribute from Britain, iv. 63, 86. The British expedition of *Cæsar*, v. 454. And of *Claudius*, 478. The Romans jealous of freedom in Britain, vi. 16. Relations of Britain with the continent, 17. Trade of the south and east of the island, 17. Coinage of *Cunobelinus*, 17. Chief states of Southern Britain, 18. *Claudius* prepares to invade it, 20. Successes of *Anulus Plautius* and *Vespasian*, 22. They probably do not cross the *Severn*, 23. *Claudius* enters Britain and subdues the *Trinovantes*, 24. Hailed *imperator* and triumphs at Rome, 26. *Vespasian* in West Britain; submission of the *Ebori* and *Iceni*, 28. Campaign of *Osterius Scapula*, 28. *Camulodunum* founded, 30. Temple of *Claudius*; the *Claudian Flamines*, 32. Distinction between the British *oppidum* and the Roman *urbes*, 33. Revolt and defeat of the *Silures*, 33. The *Britons* continue to resist; the *Silures* defeat the

- Romans, 39. The Roman province of Britain, and stations of the legions, 40. Discontent and insurrection of the Iceni, 44. They sack Camulodunum, 45. The Iceni defeated and the insurrection suppressed, 49-50. Rapid progress of civilization in Britain, 51. Prosecution of the conquest under Domitian, vii. 68. Successive prefects, 69. Campaigns of Agricola, 71-76. Enormous expense of the conquest, 77. Discovery of the insular character of Britain, 77. Hadrian's progress in Britain, 343. Flourishing state of the province, 343-345. Fortifications between the Tyne and the Solway, 346. The walls of Hadrian and of Severus, and the works of the age of Theodosius and Stilicho, 348. Completion of the wall of Antoninus, 401. Disturbances in Britain in the reign of M. Aurelius, 453.
- Britannicus (Tiberius Claudius Germanicus), son of Claudius and Messalina, v. 418. Takes a part in the "Game of Troy," 421. Agrippina's enmity to him, 423, 443. Prevented from seeing his father, 433. Commiserated by the Roman people, 445. Detained within the palace while Nero is proclaimed, 458. Poisoned by Nero, vi. 74. His funeral, 76.
- Brittany, immigrations of the Kymry into, i. 216.
- Bructeri, a German tribe, submit to Tiberius, iv. 237. Defeated by Cæcina, v. 33. Destroyed, vii. 86.
- Brundisium, occupied by Pompeius, ii. 107. Besieged by Cæsar, and evacuated by Pompeius, 108, 109. Occupied by Cæsar, 135, 195. Threatened by Antonius, iii. 182. Conclusion of the peace of, 182, 183.
- Brutus, M. Junius, father of the tyrannicide, an adherent of Lepidus, i. 49, 50, 811. Slain by Pompeius, 811; ii. 193.
- Brutus, Decimus, his services in Cæsar's Gallic wars, i. 264. Commands a naval armament against the Veneti, 291, 292. Harasses Veruincetrix, ii. 14. Commands Cæsar's fleet at the siege of Massilia, 130. His naval victory, 142, 143, 155. His second engagement, 157. Receives the proconsulship of Gaul beyond the Alps, 184, 281. Afterwards of the Cisalpine, where he represses an insurrection, 318. Consul-designate, 365. Joins the conspiracy against Cæsar, 374. Determines Cæsar to attend the meeting of the senate on the Ides of March, 381-383. His gladiators a body-guard for the conspirators, iii. 8, 18. The most active and self-possessed of the conspirators, 10, 24. Appointed to the government of Cisalpine Gaul, 31. Named in Cæsar's will 33. Promised a *libera legatio* by M. Antonius, and assumes the government of Cisalpine Gaul, 66. Antonius attempts to wrest the province from him, 81. Awaits attack, and prepares to maintain his position, 94. Shuts himself up in Mutina, and is besieged by Antonius, 101. Envoys sent to him by the senate, 107. Union of the consuls with Octavius for his relief, 115. Relieved by the retreat of the Antonians, 123. But cannot pursue them for want of cavalry and money, 125. Crosses the Alps, and joins Plancus with ten legions, 127. Recrosses the Alps, and is deserted by his soldiers, 135. Taken and slain, 136.
- Brutus, M. Junius, Cæsar's lieutenant in Spain, accompanies his uncle Cato to Cyprus, i. 811. His family and character, 812, 813; ii. 376. Idle rumour of his being Cæsar's son by Servilia, i. 312. His devotion to Cato, ii. 193. Joins the Pompeians at Thessalonica, 193. Surrenders after Pharsalia, and is taken into Cæsar's favour, 239. Cæsar's remark on him, 240. Appointed prætor, 366. Governs Cisalpine Gaul, 281. His weakness and inconsistency, 376. His panegyric of Cato, 377. Divorces Claudia, and marries Porcia, Cato's daughter, 377. Induced to lead the conspiracy against Cæsar, 378. The "Ides of March," 383. His speech to the people, 12. Refuses to put Antonius to death, 13. His mistaken views, 13. Harangues the people, but is coldly received, 18. Returns to the Capitol, 18, 28. Again harangues the people, 28, 29. Character of his oratory, 30. Appointed to the government of Macedonia, 31. Overrules Cassius in his opposition to the public funeral of Cæsar, 32. His house attacked, he flies from Rome, 41, 43. Returns to Rome, but shrinks from public affairs, 65. Escapes to Lanuvium, 66. Lingers in the neighbourhood of Rome, 67. Deprived of his government of Macedonia by Antonius, and appointed to the charge of providing corn for the city, 69. His interview with Cicero, at Antium, 70. His vacillation, 71. Exhibits the Ludi Apollinares, as city prætor, 73. Obtains leave of absence from Rome, 81. Quits Italy for the East, 94. Acknowledged by Hortensius as his successor in Macedonia, 109. Shuts up O. Antonius in Apollonia, 109. Prosecuted by Cornificius for the murder of Cæsar, and condemned, 133. Seizes the government of Macedonia, 158. Defeats O. Antonius, but spares his life, 158. Exercises his troops in Macedonia, and coins money with his own effigy, 159. Musters eight legions, 159. Joins Cassius at Philippi, 161. Rebuked by Cassius, 165. Storms the camp of Octavius, 167. Compelled to fight a second time by his soldiers, is defeated, and kills himself, 169.
- Building, considerations on the taste of the Romans in, &c., vii. 271.
- Burdo, Julius, chief of the galleys, rescued by Vitellius, vi. 321.
- Burrhus, Afranius, prætorian prefect, v. 448. Introduces Nero to the guards, 458. vi. 62. His alliance with Seneca, 63. Their influence on Nero, 70, 73. Suspected by Nero, 80. Reassures him, 80. The "Quinquennium Neronis," the work of Burrhus and Seneca, 84, 94. They uphold the senate, 91. Uncertain whether Burrhus assented to the murder of Agrippina, 102, 106. His death, and its effect on the position of Seneca, 117, 118.
- Byzantium deprived by Vespasian of its autonomy, vii. 23.

CÆCINA, ALLIENUS, urges Vitellius to seize the empire, vi. 318. Advanced by Galba to the command of a legion, 318. His march over the Great St. Bernard, 323. Takes Aventicum, and puts to death the Helvetic chief, Julius Alpinus, 323. In the Cisalpine, 331. Repulsed before Placentia, 332. Awaits the arrival of Valens, 332. Throws a bridge across the Po, 334. Permits his troops to plunder the Italian cities, 339. Meets Vitellius at Lugdunum, 340. He and Valens the real governors of Rome, 353. Sent to the north of Italy, 356. Suspected of treachery, and jealous of Valens, 356. His feeble conduct resented by the soldiers, 357. Contends in a sham fight with Titus, vii. 37.

Cæcina, Aulus, legate on the Rhine, mastery obtained over him by the mutinous troops, v. 30. Defeats the Bructeri, 33.

Cæcina Severus A., defeats the Pannonian chief Bato, iv. 247. Intercepted by the Pannonians on his march from Mæsia to join Germanicus, 254.

Cælian Hill, the, described, iv. 377. Great fire on the, v. 241.

Cælius, his dancing accomplishments, i. 84.

Cælius, Rufus M., advocates the cause of Caesar, ii. 201. His intrigues, insurrection, and death, 201-203.

Cæpio, Fannius, forms a conspiracy against the life of Augustus, iii. 367; iv. 134.

Cæpio, Servilius, defeated by the Cimbræ, i. 203. Gives Tolosa up to plunder, 207.

Cæresi, a German tribe, i. 225. Join the Belgic confederacy, 267.

Caerleon, city of, in Britain, vi. 40.

Cæsar, derivations of the cognomen, i. 91, *note* 4. The name of Cæsar as a sovereign title, iii. 333.

Cæsar, Calus Julius, i. 90. His parentage, and connection with Marius, 91. Inherits from his uncle Marius the leadership of the popular party, 92. Comprehensiveness of his views, 93. Refuses to divorce his wife Cornelia at the command of Sulla, 93. Compelled to leave Rome, 94. Seized by Cornelius Phagita, 94. Undertakes the patronage of the popular cause, 95. Learns the first rudiments of warfare at the siege of Mytilene, 95. Abstains from joining the movement of Lepidus, 96. Undertakes the impeachment of Dolabella, 96. And of C. Antonius, uncle of the triumvir, 98. Studies rhetoric at Rhodes, 97. Captured by Cilician pirates, 98. His vengeance, 98. Enters the arena of public honours, 99. Pushed forward by the zealous efforts of his party, 100. Appointed to the military tribuneship, 100. Commencement of his intercourse with Pompeius, 100. Obtains the rehabilitation of his wife's brother, Cornelius Cinna, and other Marian exiles, 101. Style of his oratory, 101. Pronounces a funeral oration in honour of his aunt Julia, 101. Defies the law of Sulla, in exhibiting the bust of Marius, 101, 104. Delivers a funeral oration over his wife Cornelia, 101, *note* 1. Serves the office of quaestor in Spain, 102. His industry and vigour

there, 102. Becomes ædile, 103. Magnificence of his shows and entertainments, 103. Contracts himself by marriage with the family of Pompeius, 103. Defends himself against the attacks of Cato, 104. Presses the claims of the republic to the kingdom of Egypt, 105. Immensity of his debts, 105. Object of the *Lex Papia de Pænegrædis*, 106. Caesar's proceedings against Sulla's agents in the proscription, 106. Presides at the trial of the senator Rabirius, 107. Prosecutes C. Calpurnius Piso, 112. Obtains the office of Pontifex Maximus, 113. Endeavours of the nobles to implicate him in Catiline's conspiracy, 114. Failure of their attempts, 120. Narrowly escapes being murdered by Cicero's attendants, 124. Hailed as the only man who could fulfil the demands of the crisis, 128. Elected prætor, 134. Proposes to deprive Cato of the honour of restoring the Capitol, 135. Becomes the censor and confidant of the tribune Nepos, 132. Scene in the Forum, 148. Deprived of his tribuneship by the senate, 143. Failure of a charge of implication in a conspiracy against him, 144. Protects the Numidian Masintha in defiance of the senate, 144. Insults Julia, 145. Publicly repudiates his wife Pompeia, 148. Refuses to proceed against Cicero, 148. Assumes the government of Further Spain, 153. His private embarrassments, 154. Obtains a loan of 500 talents from Crassus, 154. Battles the efforts of his enemies to detain him at home, 154. Subjugates the districts of Lusitania north of the Tagus, 156. Takes Bræstium in Gallia, 156. His civil administration, 157. Subdug by the army with the title of Imperator, 157. Pompeius overtures for an alliance with Caesar, 166. Return of Caesar to Rome, 166, 167. Sees for the consulship and relinquishes the honour of a triumph, 167. First occurrence of the name of Caesar in the letters of Cicero, 167. The cabal of Pompeius, Caesar, and Crassus, 169. Caesar elected consul, 170. Proposes an agrarian law, 171. Throws Cato into prison, but releases him, 172. His violent contest with the nobles, 172. Carries his law through with the high hand, 173. Plot to assassinate him and Pompeius, 174. Obtains the proconsulship of the two Gauls and Illyricum for five years, 175. His sister Julia married to Pompeius, 176. Marries Calpurnia, 176 *note* 4. Takes command of his legions, 176. Makes friendly overtures to Cicero, 181. His account of the Gauls, 211. Lingers in the neighbourhood of Rome in the beginning of the year a.c. 58. Hastily leaves Italy, and reaches his army on the Rhone, 242. Prevents the Helvetii from crossing the river at Geneva, 244. Increases his levies and follows them into the territory of the Ædui, 246. Overtakes the Tigurini and defeats them, 248. Refuses to negotiate with the Helvetii, 248. Spares the life of Dumnorix, 250. Engages the Helvetii in a decisive battle, and

entirely defeats them, 251. Compels them to return to their own country, 253. Espouses the cause of the Gauls against the Suevi, 255. Proposes terms, which are refused by Ariovistus, 255. Commences hostilities, 257. Arrests a panic in his army, 257, 258. His fruitless conference with Ariovistus, 258, 259. Defeats the Suevi, and compels them to cross the Rhine, 261. Winters in the Hither Gaul, 262. Composition of his legions, 263. Military reputation acquired by his troops, 264. List of his officers, 264 *note* 1. Hurries back to Gaul, 268. Takes the Remi under Roman protection, 268. Commencement of the second campaign in Gaul, 268. Defeats the Belgians with great slaughter, 270. Reduces the Suesiones and Bellovac, 270, 271. Marches against the Nervii and their allies, 272. His camp carried by storm by the Nervii, 274, 275. Imminent danger of his army, 275. Routs the Nervii and almost destroys their nation, 277. Sends P. Crassus to compel submission from the tribes on the north-west of Gaul, 281. Winters again in Italy, 282. Returns to Gaul, and hastens to attack the Veneti with a naval force, 290. Victory of the Romans over the Veneti, 292. Cæsar chastises the Morini and Menapii, 297. Leaves his army in winter quarters and returns to Italy, 297. His critical position under a threat of recall from his province, 301. Arrives at Luca, and is waited upon by great numbers of senators and knights, 302. Effects of his bribery and caresses, 303. Meeting of the triumvirs at Luca, 303. Cæsar defended by Cicero in his speech "*de Provinciis Consularibus*," 306. Jealousy of Cæsar's adherents at the passing of the law of C. Trebonius, 341. Law for the prolongation of Cæsar's command opposed by the senate, but carried by popular violence, 342, 343. Death of his daughter Julia, wife of Pompeius, 362. His fourth campaign, 365. Meets the invading tribes of the Usipetes and the Tenctheri, 367. Confers with the invaders, 368. Defeats the Germans near the Rhine, 371. Treachery imputed to him in the senate, 372. Cato proposes he should be delivered to the enemy, 372. Credibility of Cæsar's account of the campaign, 372, 373. Proposes to make an incursion into Germany, 373. His bridge across the line near Coblenz, 374. Inquires into the character and condition of the Britons, 375. Prepares to invade Britain, 378. Crosses the straits to Dover, 379. Effects a landing, 380. His fleet injured by a high tide, 381. His army harassed by the Britons, 382. Returns to Gaul before the equinox, 383. Despatches Sabinus and Coffa to make an incursion into the country of the Menapii, 383. Goes into Illyricum, 384. Settles the affairs of the Treviri, 384. His preparations for a second invasion of Britain, 385. In which he lands again, 386. Forms his famous camp at Rutupia, or Richborough, 386. Defeats the Britons under Cassive-

launus, 387. Accepts their promise of tribute and returns to Gaul, 389. Distributes his forces over too wide a surface, 391. Stations himself at Samarobria, 391, 396. Revolt of the Belgians, 391. Two of his legions destroyed by the Eburones, 393. Relieves Q. Cicero, 396. Remains in the north of Gaul during the winter, 396. Makes great additional levies for his sixth campaign, and borrows a legion from Pompeius, 398. Chastises the Treviri and Menapii, and crosses the Rhine, 399. Offers the plunder of the Eburones to the neighbouring tribes, 400. His unsuccessful pursuit of Ambiorix, 400, 404. Convenes the general assembly at Durocortorum, and leaves Gaul for Italy, 405. His alliance with Pompeius dissolved by the death of Julia, 437. Arrives at Luca, and watches the progress of events at Rome, 437; ii. 7. His seventh campaign in Gaul, 7. His lenient policy towards the conquered states of Gaul, 8. Favourable disposition of the Gaulish democracies towards him, 9. Lavishes the treasures of the republic on his dependants and in decorating Rome, 10. Exultation of the people at his victories, 11. Formation of a Gaulish confederacy under Vercingetorix, 12. Cæsar's energy and decision in meeting the danger, 14. Besieges and takes Avaricum, 17, 18. Enters the country of the Arverni and lays siege to Gergovia, 20. Defeated there, 22. Fords the Loire, 25. Joins Labienus at Agendicum, 25. His personal danger in a battle with the Gauls, 28. Compels Vercingetorix to surrender himself, 33. His eighth and last campaign, 35. Crushes the Bituriges, 35. Defeats and accepts the submission of the Bellovac and Suesiones, 36. Reduces Uxellodunum and finally pacifies Gaul, 37. His severity to the captured Gauls, 37. Unfairness of Pompeius towards him, 43. His critical position, 43, 49. Intrigues to be permitted to stand for the consulship while still absent from the city, 49. Endeavours of his enemies to deprive him of his consulship, 59. Pompeius supports a decree of M. Marcellus aimed directly at Cæsar, 60. Cæsar offers to resign the Transalpine and Illyricum, 61. Insulted by M. Marcellus, 61. His supposed peril in Gaul, 63. His mild and conciliatory treatment of the Gauls, 65. Conciliates the adherents of the senate in the province, 67. Attaches to himself the military spirit of the Gauls, 68. Composition of his legions, 68. Surrenders one of his legions at the demand of the senate, 73. His triumphant reception in the Cisalpine province, 76. Enthusiasm of his veterans, 77. Leaves Labienus to administer the Cisalpine province, 77. Stations himself at Ravenna, whither Curio betakes himself, 77, 78. Sends Curio to Rome with the offer of a compromise, 80. Refusal of his offers by the senate, who require him to resign his command, 81. Preparations of the consuls to oppose Cæsar's measures by force, 83. The consuls review their forces, 84.

Cæsar harangues his troops, proclaims his wrongs, and prepares to invade Italy, 88, 89. Crosses the Rubicon, 91. Occupies Ariminum, 91. Effect of the calumnies against him, 94. Pompeius negotiates with him to gain time, 98. Defection of Labienus, 99. Cæsar advances and takes Iguvium, Arretium, and Auximum, 100. His band of gladiators at Capua broken up, 102. Overruns Picenum, and takes the forces of Cingulum and Asculum, 103. Besieges Corfinium, which is betrayed into his hands, 104. Grants life and liberty to Domitius and the Pompeian leaders, 105, 106. Effects of this clemency, 106. Besieges Pompeius in Brundisium, 108. Rapidity of his success, 110. Expels the forces of the senate from Sardinia and Sicily, 121. Repairs in person to Rome, 122. Has an interview with Cicerō on the way, 122. Convenes a senate, supported by the tribunes Antonius and Cassius, 123. His studious moderation, 123. His difficulty in satisfying the demands of his soldiers, 124. Plunders the sacred treasure in the temple of Saturn, 125. Leaves Rome to attack the Pompeians in Spain, 127. Leaves his lieutenants to reduce Massilia and hastens into Spain, 129. His arrangements, 130. Preparations of the Pompeians to meet him in the field, 131. Cæsar follows his lieutenant Fabius to the valley of the Siccota, 134. Entrenches his camp in front of the enemy's position, 135. Manœuvres of the hostile armies, 137. Each side claims the advantage, 139. Cæsar's position hemmed in by a sudden rise of the waters, 140. His reinforcements rest on the further side of the river, 141. Restores his communications by the use of comæes, 142. His lieutenant D. Brutus gains a victory over the Massilians at sea, 143. Preparations of the Afranians to evacuate Ilerda, 144. Cæsar's operations to prevent their retreat, 144. Makes a feint, and moves to intercept the march of the enemy, 148. Comes up with the Afranians, but refuses to engage them, 143. Communications opened between the soldiers in the opposite ranks, 150. This intercourse broken off by Setreius, 151. The armies drawn up in front of each other in battle array, 152. Capitulation of the Pompeian lieutenants, 153. Cæsar's generosity to them, 153. Establishes his headquarters at Corduba, 160. Receives the submission of Varro, 162. Arranges the affairs of Spain, and repairs to Massilia, 163. Causes of the hostility of Juba, King of Numidia, to Cæsar, 164. Curio and the Cæsarians in Africa defeated by Juba, 166, 167. Sustains a heavy loss in a naval engagement off Illyricum, 169. Receives the submission of the Massilians, 173. Created dictator in his absence from Rome, 173. His object in seeking the appointment at this time, 174. Quells a mutiny among his soldiers at Placentia, 176. Difficulties of his position as dictator, 178. Confidence reposed in his determination to resist the cry for confiscation and blood, 179. His

financial measures, 180. His amnesty to the victims of Pompeius and Sulla's proscriptions, 182. Obtains full citizenship for the Transpadane Gauls, 183. Elected consul with P. Servilius Isauricus, 184. Resigns the dictatorship and repairs to his army at Brundisium, 185, 195. Comparison of his position with that of his adversaries, 195. Crosses over to Epirus, 195. Lands at Palaste, 196. Sends Publius Calenus for the remainder of his troops, 197. Attempt at counter revolution in Rome and Italy, 200. Attempts to cross the Adriatic in a violent tempest, 203. His manœuvres to join the second division under Antonius, 206. Blockades Pompeius within his lines at Petra, 207. Character and authenticity of the "Commentaries on the Civil War," attributed to Cæsar, 208. Review of the calculations on which Cæsar planned his operations, 210. Establishes communications with Ætolia, Thessaly, and Macedonia, 213. Occupies Achaia, 218. His discomfiture, 220. Moves towards Thessaly, 222. Anticipates the various plans the enemy may adopt, 222. Effects a junction with the division of Calpurnius on the frontiers of Epirus and Thessaly, 223. Fixes his quarters in the plain of Thessaly, 224. Gives up the town of Goughi to pillage, 224. Receives the submission of Metropolis, 224. The battle of Pharsalia and defeat of Pompeius, 227-230. Cæsar's clemency to the vanquished, 237-240. Takes M. Brutus into his favour, 239. Follows up his victory, 251. Pursues Pompeius, 252. Compels C. Cassius to surrender his fleet, 253. Arrives in Egypt, 253, 254. His horror on beholding the head of Pompeius, 254. His object in interfering in the affairs of Egypt, 254. His first interview with Cleopatra, 255. His precarious position, 256. Rising of the Alexandrians against him, 258. Burns the Egyptian fleet, 259. Puts Pothinus to death, 260. Blockaded at Alexandria, 260. Compelled to swim for his life, 261. Restores Ptolemaeus to his subjects, 262. Attacked by Ptolemaeus, 262. Joined by Mithridates, king of Pergamus, and defeats Ptolemaeus at the battle of the Nile, 262, 263. Misconduct of Cæsar's lieutenant in Spain, Q. Cassius Longinus, 267. Vigilance of his colleague Servilius in Rome, 269. Honours heaped upon Cæsar by the people, 269. Created dictator for one year, 270. Appoints Antonius his master of the horse, 270. Disaffection of his veterans in Italy, 271. Advances to encounter Pharnaces, and defeats him in the battle of Zela, 271, 272. Corruption of character by his intercourse with Cleopatra, 273. Arrives at Rome, 276. Submission of the nobles to him, 277. His firmness in protecting them against the cupidity of his own party, 278. Confiscates the estates of Pompeius and of his two sons, 279. His policy in securing the services of men of all parties, 279. Restores the statues of Sulla and Pompeius, 281. Assumes the dictatorship for the

third time, 281. Designates himself and Lepidus consuls, 281. Quells a mutiny among his soldiers, 282. Leaves Italy and lands in Africa, 290. Repulsed at Adrumetum, 291. Received at Leptis, but worsted in an engagement, 291. Obtains an advantage over Scipio, 293. Invests Thapsus, 294. Defeats Scipio at the battle of Thapsus, 295. Exacts large sums from the conquered cities, 303. Sails for Sardinia and enforces payment of a large sum from the inhabitants, 304. Reaches Rome, 305. Honours showered upon him during his absence, 306. Appointed dictator for ten years, 307. Celebration of his four triumphs, 308. Distributes largesses to the soldiers and people, 311. Exhibits gladiatorial shows, 312. Defeats the republicans at the battle of Munda, 316, 317. General view of the spirit of his legislation, 319. His sumptuary laws, 324. Abridges the consuls' term of office arbitrarily, and increases the number of the senate, 325. Communicates the Roman franchise to the provincials, 326. Assigns lands to the veterans, 328. Attempts to counteract the increase of slave labour in Italy, 329. The *justitium liberorum*, 330. Confines the judicia to the senatorial and equestrian orders, 331. Dissolves the *collegia*, 333. His favour to the Jews, 338. His project of a complete code of laws, and of a complete map of the empire, 333, 334. Establishes the first public library in Rome, 335. Reforms the calendar, 339. Begins to assume regal state, 340. Visit of Cleopatra to Rome, 341. Her son Caesarion, 341. Caesar's conduct and adulation of the nobles, 342, 343. The general feeling of the nation favourable to his power, 344. Tranquillity of Rome during his absence in Spain, 346. His personal friends, 348. Their Epicurean tenets, 352. Himself a professed unbeliever, 354. His addiction to superstition, 354. News of the victory of Munda reaches Rome, 355. Decrees passed in his honour, 356. Returns to Rome, and celebrates his last triumph, 357. Receives the appellation of father of his country and other honours, 358. Offends the senators, 360. Caesar's urbanity, 361. Visits Cicero at Puteoli, 361. Schemes of conquest attributed to him, 364. His fifth consulship, 365. Adopts C. Octavius as his heir, 366. Saluted by the title of king, 370. Rejects a royal diadem offered to him by Antonius, 371. Proposal to obtain a decree conferring upon him the title of king of the foreign subjects of the commonwealth, 373. Formation of a conspiracy against his life, 373. Preparations of the conspirators to execute their design, 380. Caesar enters the senate house, 382. Assassinated, 383, 384. Reflections on his death, 385. Judgment of the ancients on his assassination, 386. His person, character, and abilities, 388-393. His body carried to his pontifical mansion, III. 10. His papers and treasures removed to the house of Antonius, 15. His will, 32. His public funeral, 36. His apotheosis, 65. Place

of his cremation, 315. His assumption of the *prænomen imperatoris*, 348. His usurpation of the office of consul, 358. Contrast between the position of Cæsar and Pompeius with respect to the supreme power, 427.

Cæsar, Caius, son of Agrippa and Julia, adopted by Augustus, IV. 155. Introduced to public life, 190, 192. His education, 205. Assumes the gown of manhood, 208. Receives the title of prince of the Roman youth, 209. Sent to the East, 218. His interview with Tiberius at Samos, 214. Confirms Herod's will, 215. Denounces Lollius, 217. Compels Phraates the Parthian to submit to Rome, 217, 218. Wounded at Artigira, 218. His illness and death at Limyra, 218, 219.

Cæsar, Caius [Caligula], affection of his uncle Drusus for him, v. 166. Pronounces the funeral oration over the body of the empress Livia, 211. Retained by Tiberius about his own person at Caprea, 216, 236. Advanced to the priesthood by Tiberius, 221. Married to a daughter of M. Junius Silanus, 236, 252. Advanced to the quaestorship, 249. His birth and childhood passed in the Rhenish camp, 251. Named by Tiberius joint heir with his grandson Gemellus, 250. Remark of Pasiennus on his character, 252. Death of his wife, 252. Macro's ascendancy over him, 252. His intrigues with Ennia and prophecy of Tiberius, 255. Influence of Herod Agrippa over him, 277-281. Unsound in body and mind, 282. Conducts the obsequies of Tiberius, 287. His nickname of Caligula, 286 *note* 3. His accession and liberal conduct, 288. His first consulship, his devotion to business, and dissipation, 292-295. Despair of the people at his sickness at Rome and in the provinces, 295, 296. Corrupted by flattery, 298. Puts Tiberius Gemellus to death, 298. His degraded manners and personal appearance, 298, 299. His gladiatorial shows, 300. Puts Macro and Ennia to death, 301. His rapid succession of executions and confiscations, 304. His despair at the death of his sister Drusilla, 304. Marries, and shortly after repudiates, Lollia Paulina, 306. Distributes crowns and sceptres to foreign applicants, 307. His statues intruded into Jewish synagogues, 311. Claims divine worship, 312. His claim resented with indignation by the Jews, 315. His interview with Philo and the Alexandrian Jews, 316-319. Deficiency of our materials for the history of Caius, 320. How Tacitus would have painted the Emperor Caius, 322. Possibly misrepresented, 323. His early disadvantages, 323-326. Strange story of the priesthood of the Ariolan Diana, 326. Caius imbibes a notion of his own superior nature, 328. His colossal conceptions in public works: his palace, his viaduct across the Velabrum, and his bridge across the Bay of Baia, 329-335. Affects to be an orator, 337. His spite against the insignia of the nobles, 337. Really believes himself divine, 338. His bantering humour and persecution of the

- nobles, 340-342. Massacre of the exiled nobles, 343. His unpopular taxation, 344. His well-known exclamation respecting the Roman people, 345. His expedition against the Germans, 346-348. His imperial auction at Lugdunum, 349. Discovery of a conspiracy in Gaul; Caius's sisters disgraced and Lepidus and Gaius executed, 350. His marriage with Milonia Caesonia, 352. Assumes a third consulship, and resigns on the twelfth day, 352. Puts Ptolemaeus of Mauretania to death, 353. His "British expedition," 354. Avows himself a tyrant, 355. Detection of a conspiracy against him, 359. His crowning act of extravagance, 360. Conspiracy of Cassius Cherea, 361. Assassinated by Cherea, 362. His ashes honoured by his sisters, 363.
- Cæsar, L. Julius, the consul, his concession of the franchise to the Italians, i. 91. *note* 2. Sits with his kinsman Julius on the trial of Rabinus, 107. Shrinks from declaring Antonius a public enemy, iii. 107. Proscribed by the triumvirs, 140.
- Cæsar, L. (son of the last) sent by Pompeius to negotiate with Cæsar, ii. 98. Pardoned by Cæsar, 303.
- Cæsar, Lucius Julius, son of Agrippa and Julia, adopted by Augustus, iv. 135. His education, 205. Receives the title of prince of the Roman youth, 209. Sent on a mission to Spain, but dies at Massilia, 217. Tiberius's elegy on his death, 236.
- Cæsar, Sextus, governs Syria for Cæsar, ii. 318. Murdered by the Pompeians, 318. Protects Herod, iii. 302.
- Cæsarea, foundation of the city of, by Herod, iv. 163.
- Cæsarion, reputed son of Cæsar and Cleopatra, ii. 342; iii. 33. Proclaimed joint monarch of Egypt by Antonius, 226. Put to death by Augustus, 271.
- "Cæsars, Lives of the," of Suetonius, vii. 248.
- Cæsonia, Milonia, married to the emperor Caius, v. 352. His affection for her, 361. Her death, 366.
- Cæsetius, Flavius L., tribune, removes the garland and diadem from Cæsar's statue, ii. 370. Brutus demands his recall from banishment, iii. 18.
- Caieta sacked by the Cilician pirates, i. 47. *note*.
- Calatia, settlement of the Roman colony of, ii. 329.
- Calendar, the Roman, confusion of, ii. 336. Amount of error in the computation of time, 338. Reformed by Cæsar, 339.
- Calenus, Fufius, a Cæsarian, sent by Cæsar to Brundisium, ii. 197. Commands in Achaia, drives the Pompeians from that province, ii. 217. Compels Athens to submit to Cæsar, and occupies the Peloponnesus, 252. Consul *n.c.* 47, 280. His proposal to treat with Antonius, iii. 102, 104. Opposes Cicero's motion to declare M. Antonius an enemy of the state, 107. Supports Antonius, 111. And promises aid to L. Antonius, 179. His death, 181.
- Caletes, a Belgian tribe, join the confederacy against the Romans, i. 267.
- Calligula. *See* Cæsar, Caius.
- Calliæi, a Spanish tribe, i. 155.
- Callistus, freedman of Caius, conspires against him, v. 359.
- Calpurnia, daughter of L. Calpurnius Piso, married to Cæsar, i. 176. Receives her husband's dead body, iii. 14. Removes his treasure and papers to the house of Antonius, 15.
- Calpurnian family, their pride and antagonism to the Cæsarian, v. 59.
- Calpurnius Crassus, conspires against Nerva and is banished, vii. 167.
- Calvena, C. Matius, his friendship with Cæsar, ii. 351.
- Calvinus, his wars against the Vocontii, i. 196.
- Calvinus, Cn. Domitius, consul in *a.c.* 52, i. 433, 434. Commands the Cæsarians in Macedonia, 214, 216, 217. Forms a junction with Cæsar in Thessaly, 223. Summoned by him to Alexandria, 356. Attacks and is defeated by Pharnaces, 265. Named master of the horse, 366.
- Calvisius Sabinus, C., commands the Cæsarians in Ætolia, ii. 214. Takes command of a fleet for Octavius, iii. 194. Defeated by the Pompeians under Menecrates, 194.
- Camels of Bactria and Arabia, ii. 285. Not known in Africa, west of Egypt, at the time of Cæsar, 285.
- Camelus, the Gaulish chieftain, puts D. Brutus to death, iii. 135.
- Camillus, Furius, proconsul of Africa, defeats Tacfarinas, v. 57. Claims the honours of a conqueror, 57.
- Campania, admitted to the Latin franchise, i. 24. Principal cities, of, sacked by Spartacus, 51. The defence of the Campanian coast placed in the hands of Cicero, ii. 86. Lands in Campania assigned to the veterans, iii. 32. The life of the Romans on the Campanian coast, iv. 368. Ravaged by storms and pestilence, vi. 160.
- Camps, fortified, of the Romans, vii. 445.
- Campus Agrippæ, iv. 357.
- Campus Esquilinus, charnel field of the, iv. 199.
- Campus Martius, described, iv. 385-387. Athletic contests in the, 422.
- Campus Raudius, battle of the, i. 206.
- Canal, or Hesus, a Gaulish deity, identified with Mars, i. 228; iv. 84.
- Canulodunum, British city of, vi. 17. Defended by the Trinobantes, 24. Taken by Claudius, 25. Foundation of the military colony of Canulodunum, 30. Inauguration of the worship of Claudius in, 32. Sacked by the Iceni, 46.
- Canulogenus, king of the Ædui, defeated by the Romans, ii. 26.
- Candace, queen of Æthiopia, her troops routed by Petronius, iv. 105. Her high spirit, 105. Sends envoys to Augustus, who releases her from tribute, 105.
- Cangi, a tribe in Carnarvonshire, attacked by Ostorius Scapula, vi. 29.
- Canidius Crassus, an Antonian officer, defeats the Armenians, iii. 219. Commands the Antonian army at Actium, 256. Surrenders to Octavia, 256. Put to death by him, 272.

- Caninefates, a German tribe, submit to Tiberius, iv. 237, 266. Join the revolt of Civilis, vi. 387, 408.
- Cantabri, the, in the north of Spain, i. 155. Subdued by Augustus, iv. 89, 161. And by Agrippa, 137.
- Canutius, the tribune, denounces M. Antonius, iii. 90.
- Capitation tax, the, iii. 420.
- Capito, C., Ateius, on the crime of constructive majesty, v. 127. Demands the revival of charges of majesty in the reign of Nero, vi. 115.
- Capito Cossutianus, a delator, brings charges against Thrasea, vi. 167, 168.
- Capito, Titinius, his account of the "Deaths of Famous Men," vii. 244.
- Capitol, the, seized by L. Saturninus, i. 107. Recovered, 107. Burnt in the time of Sulla, 185. Restored and dedicated by Catulus, 185, 186. Again burnt in the civil wars, 186; vi. 366. Description of the capitolium in the time of Augustus, iv. 376. Decree for its restoration, vi. 374, 378. Restored by Vespasian, vii. 25. Burnt in the reign of Titus, 49. Restored by Domitian, 117.
- Capitoline contests, established by Domitian, vii. 133.
- Capitoline Hill, the, described, iv. 375.
- Cappadocia, attempts of Mithridates to gain possession of, i. 42. On the death of Archelaus, annexed to the Roman Empire, v. 51. 269.
- Caprea, island of, retirement of Tiberius in, v. 203. Description of, 204.
- Capua, proposal for drafting colonies to, i. 110. Opposed by Cicero, 110, 111. Cæsar's band of gladiators at, broken up by the senate, 117.
- Caractacus, opposes Aulus Plautius, and is worsted, vi. 22. Heads the Silures, 29. His last battle and defeat, 35 *et seq.* Brought before Claudius at Rome, v. 446; vi. 37. His speech to the emperor, 37. His life spared, 38.
- Carbo, Papirius, defeated by the migrating Cimbric and Teutonic, i. 201.
- Caria, its connection with Rhodes, iv. 107.
- Carnuntum, importance of the station of, iv. 245.
- Carnutes, a Gallic tribe, i. 281. Compelled to submit to the Romans, 282. Murder the chieftain Tasgetius, 391. Revolt against Rome, ii. 12. All-powerful authority of the Druids among them, 35.
- Carthæ, Roman garrison at, i. 425. Besieged by Surenas, 426.
- Carrinas, C., chosen consul, iii. 156. Gains a victory over the Morini, iv. 70.
- Carrinas Secundus, one of Nero's agents in plundering Asia Minor and Greece, vi. 142.
- Carthage, visited by the Emperor Hadrian, vii. 352.
- Cartimandua, chieftain of the Silures, betrays Caractacus to the Romans, vi. 30. Expelled by her subjects, and rescued by Didius, 39.
- Casca, Publius, joins the conspiracy against Cæsar, ii. 374. The first to strike at Cæsar, 383.
- Casilinum, settlement of the colony of, ii. 328, 329.
- Casperi, Ælianus, prætorian prefect, mutinies against Nerva, vi. 167.
- Cassinius, defeated by Spartacus, i. 51.
- Cassius, Avidius, his victory over the Parthians, vii. 455. Popularly charged with having caused the plague of A. D. 166, 461. His treason against Æurelius, 469. Slain by the legions, 471.
- Cassius, C., commands a Pompeian fleet, ii. 250. Destroys a Cæsarian fleet, 250. Surrenders to Cæsar, 253. His Epicurean tenets, 352. Appointed prætor, 366. Joins the conspiracy against Cæsar's life, 374. His character, 375. His talents as a statesman and general, iii. 26. Entertained by Antonius, 80. Obtains the government of Syria, 81. In Rome on the arrival of Octavius, 64. Shrinks from public affairs, and escapes to Lanuvium, 66. Lingers in the neighbourhood of Rome, 67. His interview with Cicero at Antium, 70. Obtains leave of absence from Rome, 81. Quits Italy for the East, 94. Gathers together an imposing force, 109. Gains some advantage in Syria, 109. Attacks Dolabella in Laodicea, and causes him to commit suicide, 123. Prosecuted by Agrippa for the murder of Cæsar, and condemned, 138. Becomes undisputed master of Syria, 159. His forces, 159. Chastises Rhodes, 161. Unites with Brutus at Philippi, 162. Rebukes Brutus, 165. Defeated by Antonius, 167.
- Cassius Chærea, forms a conspiracy against the life of the emperor Caius, v. 361. Honours decreed him by the senate, 366. Executed by Claudius, 369.
- Cassius Longinus, L., leads a Cæsarian army into Thessaly, ii. 214.
- Cassius Longinus, Q., serves under Crassus in Parthia, i. 417. Warns his leader of his perilous position, 417. Suggests the plan of the campaign, 420. Takes upon himself to give orders, 425. Checks the aggressions of the Parthians, ii. 56. Elected, tribune, 78. Flees to Ravenna, 82. Convoys a meeting of the senate, 123. Placed by Cæsar over the three provinces of the Spanish Peninsula, ii. 163. Receives the province of Further Spain, 184, 267. His misconduct there, 267. Attempt to assassinate him, 267. Puts Laterensis and the conspirators to death, 267. His death, 268.
- Cassius Parmensis, the last survivor of Cæsar's murderers, in arms against the triumvirate, iii. 173. Clings to S. Pompeius, but finally abandons him, 204. Put to death by Octavius, 272.
- Cassius Longinus, husband of Drusilla, v. 249. His narrow escape from death, 362.
- Cassius Severus, his writings suppressed by the senate, but restored to circulation by Caius Cæsar, v. 289.
- Cassius joins Catilina's conspiracy, i. 116. Defeated and slain by the Cimbric and Teutonic, 202.
- Cassius, C., proscribed by Nero, vi. 157.
- Cassius Longinus, entrapped by Deco-

- balus, vii. 192. His gallantry and death, 193.
- Cassivellaunus, king of the Trinobantes, defeated by Caesar, i. 357. Abandoned by his subjects and allies, he sues for peace, 359.
- Casticus, a prince of the Sequani, won over by Orgetorix the Helvetian, i. 239.
- Castra Vetera (supposed to be Xanten near Cleves), a station planted by Drusus on the Lower Rhine, vi. 390. Memmius Lupercus takes refuge there, 390. And is languered by Civilis, 392. Capitulation to, and treacherous massacre of the garrison by Civilis, 401. Defeat of Civilis and the Germans by Cerealis before Vetera, 408.
- Catacombs, theory respecting their original tenants, vii. 286 *note* 1.
- Catiline, L. Sergius, his character, i. 114, 115. Falls in his suit for the consulship, 116. Profligacy of his aims, 116. His associates and partisans, 116. Refuses to agree to a new insurrection of slaves and criminals, 117. Discovery and suppression of his conspiracy, 117. Condemnation of his associates to death, 122. His letter to Catulus from Etruria, 120. Puts himself at the head of the insurgents there, 121. His defeat and death, 122. Assistance given by the deputies of the Allobroges, in Rome, in making known the conspiracy, 210.
- Cato, the censor, i. 80, 81. Warns his countrymen against the fatal influence of Greek literature, ii. 208.
- Cato, C., tribune, produces an alleged Sibylline oracle respecting Egypt, i. 327. Harasses the senate, 330. Loses the praetorship, 339.
- Cato, M. Porcius, his early career and character, i. 79-81. Obtains a monthly allowance of corn for the people, 125. His speech on the Catilinarian conspiracy, 125. Irritates the equites on the subject of the publicani in the East, 125. His morosity, 126. Advocates the Stoic philosophy, 128. His natural good humour, 124. Becomes tribune, 124. His contest with Metellus Nepos, 141, 142. His opposition to Clodius, 148-151. Rejects an alliance with Pompeius, 165. Supports Bibulus, 163. Opposes Caesar's agrarian bill, and arrested by Caesar's lictors, 172. Refuses to swear obedience to the bill, 173. Implicated by Vettius in an assassination plot, 174. Warns the senate against Pompeius, 176. Intrigue for removing him from Rome, 306. Compelled to execute a commission for depriving Ptolemæus of Cyprus of his kingdom, 307, 308. Executes it with moderation, and defends the acts of Clodius, 307, 327. Treats Ptolemæus with contempt, 311. Accompanied on his mission by M. Junius Brutus, 311. Unsuccessful candidate for the praetorship, 329, 338. Opposes the bill for prolongation of Caesar's command in Gaul, 342, 343. Proposes that Caesar should be delivered to the Gauls, 372. Supports the nobles in refusing the dictatorship to Pompeius, 438. An unsuccessful candidate for the consulship, ii. 51. His neutral position in regard to Pompeius and Caesar, 84. Appointed to govern Sicily, 86. Surrenders Sicily to Cato, 121, 122. Possesses little influence among the Pompeians, 192. Devotion of M. Brutus to him, 193. His second marriage with Marcia, 194. Leads the Pompeian forces from Dyrrachium to Corcyra, 250. Saves Cicero's life, 251. Unites himself with Cn. Pompeius the younger, and crosses over to Africa, 283. Marches across the Libyan desert, 284. Occupies Utica, 385-388. Endeavours to animate the Romans in Utica to defence, 397. Commits suicide, 399. Judgment of the ancients upon this act, 300.
- Cato, Marcus, son of M. Porcius, his death at Philippi, iii. 163.
- Catullinus, Sextilius, chosen consul in the room of Sejanus, v. 221.
- Catullus, Valerius, his epigrams on Caesar, ii. 302, 359.
- Catulus, Q. Lutatius, his character, i. 64. For many years *princeps* of the senate, 65, 73; iii. 353. Dissuades the grant of extraordinary powers to Pompeius by the Gabinian and Manilian laws, i. 74, 75. Attacks Caesar for restoring the Marian trophies and statue in the Capitol, 165, 172. Is a candidate for the office of Pontifex Maximus, offers to buy off Caesar, but is defeated by him, 113. Urges Cicero to include Caesar and the Marian leaders among the Catilinarian conspirators, 120. Catiline's letter to Catulus, 120. Caesar's attempt to deprive Catulus of the honour of inscribing his name on the Capitol he had restored, 125. Caesar defeated, 126. His jest at the judges appointed to try Clodius, 152. His death, 170. Cicero's character of him, 170.
- Celer, an architect employed on Nero's "golden house," vi. 141.
- Celibacy, tendency of the Romans to, at the time of the Gracchi, iv. 37. Laws for enforcing marriage, 38. Penalties of celibacy, 39.
- Celsus, conspires against Hadrian, and put to death, vii. 396.
- Celtiberi, their conquest and rapid assimilation to the Roman type, i. 155. Their origin, 212.
- Cenotaphium Pisanum, to the memory of Caius and Lucius Caesar, iv. 219.
- Censor, the office of, revived by Catulus, i. 73. Restoration of the authority of the censors by the consul Scipio, ii. 50. Suppressed from a.c. 790, iii. 401.
- Census of the Roman people taken by Octavia, iii. 327. Of part of Gaul taken by Augustus, iv. 73. Of the people, in a.d. 14, iv. 253, 307. Distinction between the *census* and the *profectio*, 325, 326. Accurate information possessed by the Romans on the subject of population, 329. Approximate estimate of the population of Rome, 304. Census of Claudius, v. 386.
- Century, the prerogative, i. 361.
- Cerealis, Petillus, commands the 6th legion in Britain, vi. 46. Routed by the Iceni, 46. Commands a squadron of horse

- for the Flavians, and checked outside Rome, 368. Sent to oppose Civilis in Gaul, 403. Enters Moguntiacum, defeats the Treviri, and at Trèves reasons with the mutineers, 405. His operations in the country of the Treviri, 407. Routs the Germans and destroys their camp, 408. Defeats Civilis, 408. His want of vigilance, 409. Treats with Civilis, 410. His government of Britain, vii. 70.
- Cerialis conspires against Calus, v. 359.
- Certus, Pliny's attack on, vii. 163.
- Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, his disastrous expedition against Jerusalem, vi. 427.
- Cethegus, joins Catilina's conspiracy, i. 116.
- Chærea. *See* Cassius.
- Charlot races, iv. 414. In the time of the emperor Calus, v. 300.
- Charonitæ, or Orcini, origin of the name, iii. 52.
- Chatti, a German tribe, overcome by Germanicus, and their stronghold destroyed, v. 31. Punished by Galba, 377. And by Domitian, vii. 82.
- Chanci, the, admitted into alliance with Rome, iv. 266. Punished by Corbulo, v. 377; vi. 14.
- Cherusci, a German tribe, submit to Cæsar, iv. 237. Their war with the Marcomanni, v. 54. A king (Italicus) given to them by Claudius, vi. 13.
- Chian wines, iv. 316.
- Chorographical surveys in use at Rome, iv. 325.
- Chosroes, king of Parthia, his interference in the affairs of Armenia, vii. 298. His presents rejected by Trajan, 298. His feuds with his vassals, 304. Escapes from Trajan's lieutenants into Media, 306. Capture of his daughter, and of his golden throne, 306. Restoration of his daughter, 350.
- Chrestus, the sophist, his answer to Hadrian, vii. 361.
- Christ, date of His birth, iv. 347.
- Christians; first persecution of the persons "to whom the vulgar gave the name of Christians," vi. 134. The first Christians in Rome, 210. Toleration allowed them by the government, 213. Story of Pomponia Græcina, 215. Outburst of the persecution in Rome, 216. Difficulty of accounting for this supposed persecution of the Christians, 217. Christianity little noticed in Rome before, and for some time after, Nero, 219. Question as to the persons designated Christians, 220. Conjecture of Gibbon, 221. Suggestion of another view, 221. General religious toleration under Nero, 223. Reflections on the depraved morality of the age, 226. Christianity congenial to certain moral tendencies of the age, 229. The Christians retire from Jerusalem shortly before the siege, 450. Hostile attitude of Domitian towards Christianity, vii. 123. Alleged persecution under him, 127. Overthrow of the Jewish and succession of the Christian dispensation, 291. Inquisition into the tenets of the Christians, 287. Alleged decrees of Nero and Domitian, 287. Pliny's letter to Trajan respecting the Christians in Bithynia, 288. Pliny's proceedings against them there, 289. His testimony to their virtues, 291. Popular apprehension of their political intrigues, 292. Superstitious terrors of the people, 292. The martyrdom of St. Ignatius, 293. Development of the Christian society, 294. The Church, the Canon of Scripture, and Episcopacy, 295. Final separation of the Christians from the Jews, 319. The Christian teachers and apologists of the second century A.D., 368. Hadrian's toleration of the Christian faith, and interest taken by him in the dogmatic teaching of the Christians, 369, 373. Indulgence of Antoninus Pius to them, 405. Persecution of them under M. Aurelius, 488. Early martyrs, 489.
- Christa, false, or brigands, in Judea, vi. 420.
- Cibyra, state of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 362.
- Cicero, M. Tullius, engaged on the prosecution of Verres, i. 71. His services engaged in transferring a share of the judicia to the knights, 72. His early career, 75-77. Impeaches Verres, 71. Acts with Pompeius and Crassus, 72. Defends Fontelus, 73, 208. Defends Rabirius, 108. Effects of foreign learning on his skill and experience, 97. Opposes the agrarian law of Rullus, 111. Defends C. Calpurnius Piso, 112. The Catilinarian conspiracy, 117-124. Becomes consul, 116. Prevents the murder of Cæsar, 124. Inclines to the senatorial order, 125. Defends the consul Murena, 133. His popularity, 141, 150. Addressed as "Father of his country," 141. Joins in the outcry against Clodius, 148. Crassus' panegyric upon the conduct of Cicero, 150. His speech in the Flaminian Circus, 150. Makes an implacable enemy of Clodius, 153. His views of the proposed agrarian law of the tribune Flavius, 161. Cajoled by Pompeius, 166. Opposes the restoration of the *collegia*, 178. Danger of his position, 180. Rejects Cæsar's friendly overtures, 181. Appeals to the compassion of the people, 182. And to Pompeius and the consuls, 183. Goes into exile, 186. Considerations on his banishment and confiscation of his property, 298-305. His unmanly complaints in exile, 313. Exortions of his friends in his behalf, 315. High spirit of his wife Terentia, 319. Takes up his residence at Dyrrachium, 319. His return to Rome, 323. Attacks Cæsar's law for the division of lands in Campania, 334. Attaches himself to the triumvirs, 335. His speech "*de Provinciis Consularibus*," 337. His political position and mental resources, 347, 348. His hatred of Crassus, 348. Attacks Gabinius, 355. Defends him, 357. Affects cordiality towards Crassus, 357. Apologizes for his conduct in supporting the triumvirs, 358. His speech "*Pro Milone*," 430. His activity in pleading, ii. 52. His attachment to the younger Curius, 52. Elected augur, 53. Governs Cilicia, 54-57. His military exploits and civil administration, 57. Re-

turns to Italy, 79. Claims a triumph, 79. Confers with Pompeius on the state of affairs, 79. Put in charge of the Campanian coast, 86. His interview with Pompeius at Formiæ, 93. Hesitates between Caesar and Pompeius, 95. His fears and melancholy, 108. His interview with Caesar at Formiæ, 192. Forbidden to leave Italy, 171. His seurrility to Antonius, 172. Arrives in the Pompeian camp, 191. Dissatisfaction of the nobles with him, 226. Withdraws from the contest, 251. His life threatened by young Pompeius, 251. Allowed to establish himself at Brundisium, 277. Well received by Caesar, 278. Conceives the idea of a complete code of laws, 384. Courts and is offended by Cleopatra, 343. His speech "*Pro Marcello*," 344. And for Ligarius, 344. Visited by Caesar at Puteoli, 361. His letter to Caesar on the invasion of Parthia, 363. A partisan of liberal innovation, his pure morality, 415. Joins Brutus and the conspirators in the Capitol, iii. 11. Urges them to assume the government, 18. Advocates the ratification of Caesar's acts, 24, 26. Disapproves of the speech of Brutus, 29. Appeal of the false Marius to him, and his ironical reply, 48. Retires to Puteoli, 49, 54. His alarm at the agrarian law of L. Antonius, 53. His behaviour to Dolabella, 55. His first interview with Octavius, 58. His efforts to form a conservative party, 64. His interview with the libertators at Antium, 70, 71. Joins Brutus, 74. His melancholy anticipations and irresolution; composes his treatises on "*Old Age*," "*Friendship*," "*Glory*," and "*Fate*," 75-77. Embarks for Greece, but returns to Rome, 82-84. Delivers his first Philippic, 86. His activity and spirit, 94. Composes his second Philippic, 95. His mistaken estimate of Octavius, 97. Composes his "*Treatise on Moral Duties*," 98. Effect produced by the publication of the second Philippic, 99. His position in the commonwealth, 99. The third and fourth Philippics, 100. Enthusiasm of the people, 100. Opposes negotiation with Antonius, 102. Composes his fifth Philippic, 102. His glowing panegyric on Octavius, 108. Harangues the people in his sixth Philippic, 104. Is himself the government, 106. Indignant at the treatment of the senatorian envoys by Antonius, 107. His eighth Philippic, 107. Proposes a monument to Sulpicius, 108. Causes the senate to proclaim Dolabella a public enemy, 111. His twelfth Philippic, 113. Named one of a deputation to Antonius, and accedes, but subsequently recoils, 113. Replies of Antonius and Cicero's rejoinder, 115. In the consul's absence he assumes the lead in the city, 116. Enthusiasm of the citizens towards him, 120. His fourteenth and last Philippic, 120. Abandons all hope of Octavius, 123. His sarcasm on Octavius's demand for the consulship, 130. Abandoned to proscription by Octavius, 130-141. Doomed to massacre, 141. His proscription and flight, 144, 145. His vacillation, arrest, and death, 146, 147.

Reflections on his death and character, 148-153.

Cicero, M., son of M. Cicero and Terentia, offers his services to Brutus, iii. 172. In arms against the triumvirs, 173.

Cicero, Quintus, brother of M. Tullius, his military education under Caesar, i. 264. His propraetorship in Asia, 315. Appointed a commissioner for provisioning the city, 325 *note*.² His letters from Sardinia to his brother, 335. Accepts the post of legatus to Pompeius in Spain, 347, 358. His camp in the Nervian territory attacked by the Belgians, 394. His character, 394. His resolute defence, 395. Relieved by Caesar, 396. Left with one legion in Aduatua, 400, 403. Attacked by the Germans who are repulsed, 404. Supports his brother Marcus in his government of Cilicia, ii. 57. Abandons Caesar, but endeavours to regain his favour by calumniating his brother, 278. Persecuted by the triumvirs, iii. 145. Returns to Rome, and with his son is murdered, 145, 146.

Cilicia, government of, falls by lot to Lentulus Spinther, i. 328. The proconsulship of, accepted with reluctance by Cicero, ii. 54. State of the province at this period, 54. Placed under the control of Sestius, ii. 86. Given by Antonius to Polemo, iii. 190. Extent of the province, iv. 103. Affairs in the times of the triumvirate and of Augustus, 103. Desire of the inhabitants of the autonomous districts of Cilicia to be placed under the dominion of Rome, v. 51. The whole absorbed into the Roman empire, vii. 23.

Cilician pirates, their origin, i. 45. Their exploits, 45-48. Suppressed by Cn. Pompeius, 48. Their capture of Caesar, 98.

Cinii, the royal house of Arretium, decline of their fortunes, iii. 214.

Cimber, L. Tullius, joins the conspiracy against Caesar's life, ii. 375. Obtains the government of Bithynia, iii. 31.

Cimbri, the origin and great migration of, i. 198. Defeat the Romans and overrun Gaul, but destroyed at Verceil, 201-206.

Cingetorix, chieftain of the Treviri, favoured by Caesar, i. 284. Denounced by Indutiomarus, 398.

Cinna, Cnaeus Cornelius, conspires against Augustus, iv. 223. Pardoned and raised to the consulship, 224. The story examined, 226.

Cinna, Cornelius, his rehabilitation obtained by his brother-in-law Caesar, i. 101. Lays down his praetorian insignia, iii. 16. Puts on his praetor's robes, and is maltreated by the populace, 20.

Cinna, Helvius, his insulting proposal respecting Caesar, ii. 342. Torn to pieces at Caesar's funeral, iii. 42.

Circus, taste of the Italians for the games of the, ii. 312; iv. 414. Extent of the Circus Maximus, iv. 403. The circus described, 414. Chariot races, 414. Exhibition of wild beasts, 415. Gladiatorial combats, 416. Sentiments of antiquity on these bloody spectacles, 416. The circus in the time of the emperor Caius, v. 294, 300. Of

- Claudius, 394. And of Nero, vi. 126. Who drives his chariot in the Circus Maximus, 126. Erection of the Colosseum, iv. 413; vii. 86.
- Cirta, capital of Numidia, threatened by the Mauretanians, ii. 292.
- Cities, the great, of the Roman empire, and Grecian cities in Italy, iv. 350-365.
- Citizenship, Roman, iii. 390. Augustus affects to maintain the estimation of, 390. Number of citizens in A. U. 767, iv. 307.
- Civil law. *See* Law.
- Civilla, Claudius, chief of the Batavi, snatched from the fury of the legionaries, vi. 321. Injured by the Romans, 386. Excites the Gaulish states to revolt, 388. Defeats Mummius Lupercus in the island of the Batavi, 389. Beleaguers the station of Castra Vetera, 392, 394. Envoys to him from Vespasian, 395. Takes Asciburgium and attacks Vocula, but retreats with heavy loss, 396. His success, and anticipations of Gaulish emancipation, 399. Communicates with the auxiliaries in the Roman camp, 400. Massacres the garrison of Vetera, 401. Seeks to form a German kingdom at Colonia Agrippinensis, 401. Courts Velleda, the Batavian prophetess, 402. Cooperates with Classicus, 406. His wife and children in the hands of the Romans, 408. Defeated before Castra Vetera, 408. Crosses the Rhine, and enters the territories of his allies, the Chauci and Frisii, 409. Treats with the Romans, 410. His end unknown, 411.
- Civita Vecchia, Trajan's wall at, vii. 205.
- Clarus, Erucius, assists in reducing Selaucia, vii. 306, 307.
- Clarissimi, the, described, vii. 439.
- Classes, distinction of, in the Roman empire, iv. 302. Citizens, subjects, and allies, 302. Slaves, 302. Distinctions of condition in the provinces, 305. Independent communities gradually reduced to subjection, 306. Numbers of the citizens, 307. Indirect effect of slavery in combining the various classes of men together, 309. *See* Romans.
- Classicus, a Gaulish officer of Treviri, enters into a conspiracy to liberate Gaul, vi. 399. Takes Vocula's life, 400. Endeavours to corrupt Cerealis, 406.
- Classicianus, procurator, in Britain, complains to Nero of Suetonius Paulinus, who is removed in consequence, vi. 50.
- Claudia Pulchra, found guilty of adultery and majestas, v. 191.
- Claudia, or Claudilla, married to Caius Caesar (Caligula), v. 236, 252. Her death, 252.
- Claudia, infant daughter of the emperor Claudius, abandoned, v. 309.
- Claudia, daughter of Caracaus, vi. 38.
- Claudian and Flavian writers compared, vii. 222.
- Claudius, Appian, elected consul, i. 353. His unblushing venality, 353, 354. Entrusted by the Senate with the province of Achaia, ii. 217. Consults the oracle at Delphi, 217. His delusion and death, 218.
- Claudius (Tiberius Claudius Drusus), his infirmities of health and understanding, v. 243. His early life, v. 243, 372. Associated by the emperor Caius with himself in the consulship, 290. His extraordinary industry in literary labor, 374, 375. Circumstances of his accession to the empire, 366. The senate accepts the choice of the praetorians, 368. His moderation and good intentions, 369, 370. Takes Augustus for his model, 377. His military enterprises and conduct of foreign affairs and of the colonies, 378, 379. Maintains the dignity, and revises the list, of the senate, 382. Opens it to provincial families, and especially to Gaulish nobles, 383. Revises the lists of the knights, 385. His censorship, 386. His measures for the conservation of religion, 387. His administration of justice, 388, 419. His public works, 390. The new haven at Ostia, 391. Drains Lake Fucinus, 392. His shows and provisions for the amusement of the people, 393. His intemperance, 396. The history of the wives of the princes becomes that of the principate in his reign, 396. His wives, 398. Influence of Messalina, and regimen of freedmen, 400. Claudius their tool, 406. He recalls the sisters of Caius from exile, and banishes Seneca, 406. Conflicting statements of his weakness and good sense, 409-411. Vinicianus and others conspire against him, 409. Strange inconsistency in the accounts of his conduct, 411. His expedition to Britain, 413. His son, surnamed Britannicus, 413. His diligence in administering the laws, 413. His secular games, 421. Marriage of Messalina with Silius perhaps instigated by Claudius from a superstitious motive, 427. His alarm, 430. And last meeting with Messalina, 433. His vacillation about her sentence, 434. Intrigues for supplying a successor to Messalina, 436. Claudius marries Agrippina, 440. Adopts Domitian Nero, 444. Attacked by the people in the forum, 449. His measures for promoting morality and good order, 449. Extends the privileges of the knights, 451. His remark on the crimes and punishment of his wives, 454. His decline, 456. Poisoned by Agrippina, 456. Estimate of his character, 459, 460. Seneca's adoration and abuse of Claudius, 460-466. History of his invasion and conquest of southern Britain, vi. 8 et seq. Claudius by birth a Gaul, 8. His liberal policy towards the Gauls, 9. His proscription of Druidism, 12. Gives a king to the Cheruscan, 13. Prepares to invade Britain, 20. Orders Aulus Plautius to invade the island, 20. Takes the command in person, and defeats the Trinobantes, 24, 25. Triumphs at Rome, 25. His clemency to Caracaus, 37. His funeral oration pronounced by Nero, 65. Who consecrates a temple to him, 84.
- Clemens, the pretended Agrippa Posthumus, his adventures, v. 88.
- Clemens, Flavius, accused of Judaizing and put to death, vii. 126.
- Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemæus Aniletes, joint heir to the crown of Egypt with her brother Ptolemæus XII., ii. 243. Driven

- from Alexandria, 244. Her quarrels with her brother, 244. Her first interview with Caesar, 256. Restored to the throne by him, 256. Her evil influence on Caesar, 273-275. Visits Rome, where she makes him unpopular, and offends Cicero, 341-343. Her disappointment at the result of Caesar's will, iii. 33. Quits Rome, 33. Her first meeting at Tarsus with Antonius, who follows her to Alexandria, 175. Their intimacy, broken by his marriage with Octavia, renewed, 219. Her twins by Antonius, 220. Roman provinces assigned by Antonius to her and her children, 226. Her ambitious views, 227. Her orgies, 228, 229. At Samos, 238; Octavius declares war against her, 238. Induces Antonius to decide the war at sea, 245. Offends his officers, 247. Counsels Antonius to return to Egypt, 250. Their flight from Actium, 253. Her severities to the Alexandrians and to Artavasdes, and preparations for escape, 260, 261. Her plans disconcerted, 261. Adopts measures of defence, and negotiates with Octavius, 261. Her revelries and despair, 262. Hopes to make an impression on the heart of Octavius, 264. Spreads a report of her own death, 265. Her interview with the dying Antonius, 265. Taken prisoner by Proculeius, 266. Her interview with Octavius, and suicide, 267, 268. Manner of her death uncertain, 270. Her effigy borne in triumph, 270. The "Loves of Antony and Cleopatra," 275. Cleopatra makes advances to Herod, which he rejects, 307.
- Cleopatra Selene, daughter of M. Antonius and Cleopatra, endowed by her father with the sovereignty of Cyrene, iii. 226. Marries the younger Juba, iv. 91.
- Clivus Asyli, iv. 377.
- Clivus Capitolinus, iv. 377.
- Clodia, daughter of P. Clodius and Fulvia, married to Octavius, iii. 140, 217. Divorced by Octavius, 163, 217.
- Clodius, C., defeated by Spartacus, i. 50, 51.
- Clodius, P., his charge of malversation against Catiline, i. 114. His early life and character, 145. His intrigue with Pompeia, wife of Caesar, 146. Profanes the mysteries of Bona Dea, 146-148. Failure of the proceedings against him, 151, 152. He meditates vengeance against the nobles, Cicero especially, 153. Elected a tribune of the people, 177. Clodius's acts; repeals the *Jeliam* and *Fufian* laws, 177-179. Drives Cicero into exile, 184, 208. Razes Cicero's house on the Palatine, and plunders his Tusculan villa, 209-302. His triumphant career, 305. Assigns provinces to Pisa and Gabinus, 305. His intrigue for removing Cato from Rome, 306. Reaction against Clodius, 321. His increasing violence, 321. Opposed by Milo, 322. Hostile attitude of the senate towards him, 326. Becomes *adile*, 329. Renewal of his contests with Milo, 330. Cast off by Pompeius, 330. Candidate for the pretorship, 335. His encounter with Milo on the Appian way, and death, 336.
- Clodius, Sextus, his resolution denouncing Cicero, i. 299, 300. Punished for a breach of the peace, ii. 44. His recall from banishment proposed by Antonius, iii. 46. In arms against the triumvirs, 173.
- Cnidus seized by the Cilician pirates, i. 47 *note*. State of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 360.
- Cocceianus, put to death by Domitian, vii. 147.
- Cœli-Syria submits to the Roman yoke, i. 138. Given to Herod the Great, iii. 303.
- Cœnis, Vespasian's mistress, vii. 19.
- Cogidubnus, king of the Regni, vassal of Rome, takes the name of Tiberius Claudius, vi. 27.
- Colchester, colony of, founded by Claudius, v. 379.
- Colleges, or guilds of trades, in Rome, i. 177. Restored by Clodius, 178. Dissolved by Caesar, ii. 333.
- Colonia Agrippinensis (Cologne) founded by Agrippina, v. 379, 445. *Civitas* seeks to found a German sovereignty at Colonia, vi. 401.
- Colonies of Augustus and Claudius, v. 379; vi. 31. Character of the Roman colony in Britain, 31. Those of Vespasian in Latium and Campania a symptom of the decrease of population in Italy, vii. 26.
- Colophon seized by the Cilician pirates, i. 47 *note*.
- Colosseum, erection and description of the, vii. 86-40. Dedication of, by Titus, 55.
- Comet, accounted the precursor of Nero's fall, vi. 143.
- Comitia, the, abolished by Tiberius, v. 17. Its threefold functions:—1. Election of magistrates, 38. 2. The power of legislation, 101. 3. And criminal jurisdiction, 107. Transferred to the senate, and thence to the emperor, 112. Restored for a time by Caligula, v. 289.
- Commagene, kingdom of, iv. 113. Presented by Augustus to a child named Mithridates, 113. Desire of the people of to be under the dominion of Rome, v. 51. Placed under the government of a propraetor, 269. Restored by Claudius to Antiochus, 379. Deprived of its autonomy by Vespasian, vii. 24.
- Commerce, the, of the Mediterranean, iv. 313. Limited character of ancient, 317. Security of maritime commerce under the Empire, 331.
- Communa, the Atrabate, sent by Caesar to Britain, i. 379. Made prisoner, but released by the Britons, 381. His romantic adventures and hatred of the Romans, ii. 36. Perfidy of Labienus to him, 38. Surrenders himself to Caesar upon honourable terms, 38.
- Communi, an Alpine tribe, defeated by P. Silius, iv. 160.
- Commum, Novum, colony at, founded by Caesar, ii. 62.
- Conan Meriadec, obtains a sovereignty in Brittany, i. 217 *note* 1.
- Concord, temple of, meeting of the senate in the, i. 121.
- Concubinage among the Romans, ii. 273.
- Condrusi, a German tribe, join the Belgic confederacy, i. 267. Submit to Caesar, 400.

- Conetodonns, a Gaulish chieftain, attacks the Romans, ii. 12.
- Congentiatus, son of Bituitus, prince of the Arvernians, i. 196.
- Consentia besieged by Sextus Pompeius, iii. 182.
- Considius Longus, C., holds Adrumetum for the republicans, ii. 290. Killed by the Gatulians, 302.
- Considius, appointed to the government of Cisalpine Gaul, ii. 86.
- Consistorium, the, of the emperors, described, vii. 438.
- Constitutionis principia, iii. 378.
- Consuls, their term of office abridged by Cæsar, ii. 325. Institution of the office of, iii. 344. The consul imperator only in the field, 345. Lays aside the ensigns of command on entering the city, except only in the case of a triumph, 345, 346. The consulship under the republic, 356. The office usurped by Julius Cæsar, 358. Numerous and successive consulships of Octavius, 358. Events which led to conferring on Augustus the "potestas consularia," 365. Position of the consuls under the empire, 399. The appointment of the consuls by the people abolished by Tiberius, v. 17. State of the consulship in the Flavian era, vii. 432.
- Convictolitans elected vergobret of the Ædui, ii. 19. Betrays his patron Cæsar, ii. 21.
- Coponius, C., commands a squadron of Rhodians in the service of Pompeius, ii. 204.
- Coracles, built after the British model by Cæsar in Spain, ii. 142.
- Corbulo, Domitius, his successes over the Chauci, v. 377; vi. 14. His campaign in Germany, 14. His canal from the Maas to the Rhine, 16. His campaigns in Armenia, 265. Places Tigranes on the throne, 265. His vigorous measures in Judea, 424. Is formidable to Nero, 268, 272. Summoned by Nero to Greece, and destroys himself, 272.
- Coreyra, taken by Octavius from the Antonians, iii. 247.
- Corduba, Cæsar at, ii. 160.
- Corellius Rufus, Pliny's account of his suicide, quoted, vii. 256.
- Corfinium, Domitius, defeated by Cæsar at, ii. 104.
- Corinth, condition of, at the time of Augustus, iv. 352, 353. Nero's proposed canal through the Isthmus, vi. 271.
- Corn-fleets of the Mediterranean and Roman traffic in corn, iv. 313. Rejoicings in Egypt on the arrival of the Egyptian corn-fleet, 314.
- Cornelia, wife of Cæsar, ordered by Sulla to be divorced, i. 93. The command disregarded by her husband, 93. Her funeral oration pronounced by Cæsar, 101 *note* 3.
- Cornelia, the vestal virgin, buried alive, vii. 105.
- Cornelia, daughter of Scipio, married to Pompeius, ii. 47. Sent for security to Lesbos, 193. Witnesses the murder of her husband, 246.
- Cornificius, L., prosecutor Brutus for the murder of Cæsar, iii. 133. Commands a corps for Octavius in Sicily, 200. His gallant retreat to Mylae, 200.
- Cornificius, Q., the younger, sent by Cæsar to hold Illyricum, ii. 266.
- Cornutus, tutor of Persius, friend of the Senecas, vi. 238.
- Correspondence of the Romans, collection of private, vii. 249. The letters of the younger Pliny, 250.
- Correus, king of the Bellovaci, defeated and killed, ii. 86.
- Corsica, under the Romans, i. 83; iv. 123. Population of, under the empire, 340. Sides with Otho against Vitellius, vi. 381.
- Cos, the emperor Claudius pleads for the boon of immunity to, v. 453.
- Cosconius, a senator, killed by Cæsar's mutinous soldiers, ii. 282.
- Cotta, Aurelius, his conquests in Gaul, i. 117. Serves under Cæsar, 264. Sent with Sabinus to chastise the Menapii, 382. Attacked by the Eburones under Ambiorix, 392. Killed in an ambuscade, 393.
- Cotta, entrusted by the senate with the care of Sardinia, ii. 86.
- Cottius, king of the Cottian Alps, his treaty with Augustus, iv. 87, 88.
- Cotuatius, a chieftain of the Carnutes, revolts against the Romans, ii. 12.
- Council of State instituted by Augustus, iv. 146. The consistorium or auditorium, vii. 439.
- Coway Stakes, supposed origin of the name of the, i. 387.
- Crassus, Calpurnius, lays a plan for assassinating Trajan, vii. 213. Put to death, 213.
- Crassus, Otacilius, in the service of Pompeius, ii. 205. Massacres a detachment of Cæsarians, 205. An adherent of L. Antonius, iii. 181. Commands an immense armament of Antonians, 245.
- Crassus, M. Licinius, appointed to continue the war against Spartacus, i. 51. Crushes the insurrection, 52. His banquet to the citizens, 52. His character, 66. His name proverbial as the "richest of the Romans," 67. Modes in which he made his money, 67. Unites with Pompeius in transferring a share in the *judicia* to the knights, 72. Supports the Manilian Bill, 75, 108. The nobles seek to involve him in the charge of conspiring with Catiline, 114, 119. His spoliation of the temple of Jerusalem, 139 *note* 3, iii. 300. His panegyric upon the conduct of Cicero, i. 150. Joins with Pompeius and Cæsar in the first triumvirate, 168. Supports Cæsar in his claim for the proconsulship of the Gauls and Illyricum, 176. His enmity with Pompeius, but reconciled by Cæsar at Luca, 333. Elected consul with Pompeius, 339. Their turbulent election, 339. Bill of Tribonius for giving the province of Syria to Crassus, 342. Hatred of Crassus and Cicero, 348. Their hollow reconciliation, 348. Succeeds Gabinius in the government of Syria, 353. Sets out for his government, 411. Imprecations of Atellus upon him as he quits Rome, 413. Crosses the Euphrates, and gains some trifling successes, 414. Commits various acts of sacrilege, 414. Embassy of the Parthians, and mu-

- tual defiance, 416. Advice of Cassius and Artabazes regarding the conduct of the campaign, 417. Different routes open to him, 417. Discouragement of his army, 419. Misled by the treachery of Abgarus, king of Osroene, 422. Geographical difficulties of Crassus's line of march, 423. Engages the Parthian army, 424. Death of his son, 424. Takes refuge in Carrhae, 425. Abandons Carrhae, 426. Dispersion of his army, 426. Stratagem of Surenas to engage him in conference, in which he is murdered, 427. His standards restored by the Parthians to Augustus, iv. 116. Indignities offered to his remains, i. 429. Reflections on the death of the Crassi, father and son, 430.
- Crassus, Calpurnius, conspires against Nerva, and banished, vii. 167.
- Crassus, P., son of the triumvir, his military education under Caesar, i. 264. Sent by him to demand the submission of the north-western tribes of Gaul, 281. Commands a legion quartered among the Andi, 289. Deported by Caesar to prevent the Aquitanians from joining the Gaulish insurgents, 291. His campaign in Aquitania, 295. Effects its reduction, 297. His death in the Parthian war, 425. The "Lusus" of Roman History, 430. His virtues, 430 *note* 2.
- Crastinus, the centurion, his speech to Caesar at Pharsalia, ii. 292.
- Cremona, given by Octavius to his legions, iii. 177. Sacked and burnt by the Flavians, vi. 358.
- Cremutius Cordus, the historian, prosecuted by clients of Sejanus, v. 182. Provokes his judges by his defence, and destroys himself, 183. His books burnt, but some copies of them preserved, 183. Caius Caesar permits them to be circulated again, 289.
- Crete, reduced by Q. Metellus Creticus, i. 140. Importance of Crete to the Romans, 140. Annexed to the Cyrenaica by Metellus, iv. 93.
- Criminal jurisdiction of the people and of the senate, v. 107. Overridden by the fixed tribunals, 107. The appeal transferred from the people to the emperor, 108. Cognizance of charges against senators, 108. The senate under the empire becomes the chief court of criminal jurisdiction, 109. Paramount jurisdiction of the emperor himself, 109.
- Crispinus, Rufus, proscribed, vi. 162. His death, 162.
- Crispus, Q., places himself under the orders of Cassius, iii. 109.
- Crixus, one of the leaders in the revolt under Spartacus, i. 51 *note*.
- Crowns, naval, of the Romans, iii. 218.
- Ctesiphon, city of, taken by Trajan, vii. 305. The palace of, burnt by Avidius Priscus, 455.
- Cuma, battle between the Caesarians and Pompeians in the bay of, iii. 194.
- Cumanus, procurator of Judea, rising of the Jews in his time, vi. 421.
- Cunobellinus, king of the Trinobantes, coinage of, vi. 17. His power in southern and eastern Britain, 18.
- Curio, family of, ii. 52.
- Curio, C. Scribonius, the elder, discloses to Pompeius the plot of Vettius, i. 174. Allows the justice of conceding the right of citizenship on the Transpadane Gauls, ii. 183.
- Curio, C. Scribonius, the younger, saves Caesar, i. 124. Implicated in the accusation of Vettius, 174: ii. 52. Cicero's mistaken opinion of and attachment to him, 53. His character, 53. Elected tribune, 59. His character and conduct, 71. Goes over to Caesar, 71. His measures on Caesar's behalf, 73. Attempts to expel him from the senate, 74. Betakes himself to Caesar at Ravenna, 78. Is sent by Caesar with an offer of compromise to Rome, 80. His second flight to Caesar, 82, 83. Takes the place of Labienus in Caesar's confidence, and expels the senatorian troops from Sardinia and Sicily, 121, 164. His campaign, defeat, and death in Africa, 165-167.
- Curio, son of the tribune, put to death by Augustus, iii. 256.
- Curiosolite, the, compelled to submit to the Romans, i. 281.
- Curius, Q., his unfounded charge against Caesar, i. 143.
- Curule magistracies, offices comprehended in the term, i. 62 *note*.
- Customs duties under the empire, iii. 424.
- Cybele, worship of, among the Romans, vi. 200. The cult of, naturalized at Rome, vii. 121.
- Cynics, banishment of the, from Rome, vii. 82.
- Cyprus, its important position, vii. 309. Sanguinary outbreak of the Jews under Artabanus, 309.
- Cyrenaea, the sanguinary revolt of the Jews in, vii. 310.
- Cyrene, attempt of Labienus on, ii. 283. Opens its gates to Cato, 283. Given by Antonius to his daughter Cleopatra Seleue, iii. 226. Description of the Cyrenaica in the time of Augustus, iv. 93. Population of Cyrene at this time, 342. Insurrection of the Jews in Cyrene, vii. 309.
- Cyzicus deprived of its freedom by Augustus, iv. 106. Its commerce in the time of that emperor, 360.
- D**ACIANS, their hostile attitude against Rome, vii. 86. Driven beyond the Ister by Ponticus Agrippa, 87. The same people as the Getae, 87, 182. Domitian's campaign against them, 87. Defeat Fuscus and are defeated by Julianus, 88, 89. Send an envoy to Rome to treat for peace, 90. Their first war with Trajan, 181. Their wealth and civilization, 182. Their gold and silver mines, 182. Their geographical position, 182. Their predatory incursions, 182. Sue for peace, deliver up their arms, and send envoys to Rome, 187. Their second war with Rome, and defeat, 189, 196. Dacia becomes a Roman province, 200. Monuments of its conquerors, 200. Martius Turbo placed in command by Hadrian, 333.

- Dalmatians, revolt of the, quelled by Tiberius, iv. 187. Causes of a subsequent rising of the, 246. Subdued by Germanicus, 254. Number of legions stationed in Dalmatia in the reign of Tiberius, v. 142.
- Dancing amongst the Romans, i. 84.
- Danube, Roman fortresses on the banks of the, iv. 177.
- Deceata, a Ligurian tribe, marked out for Roman vengeance, i. 195.
- Decebalus, perhaps the same as Diurpaneus, king of the Dacians, vii. 87. Meaning of the title, 87 *note* 2. Forms relations with Pacorus II., king of Parthia, 297. Concludes peace with Domitian, 89, 90. His residence at Zernizegethusa, 185. Routed by Trajan, 186. Sues for peace, and forms an alliance with the Romans, 187. Yields up his forts and goes to Rome, 187. Entraps Cassius Longinus and demands peace as the price of his liberty, 192. His defeat and death, 193. Discovery of his buried treasure, 194.
- Declanus, Catus, procurator in Britain, vi. 44.
- Decidius Saxa, commands a division of the triumvirs' forces in Macedonia, iii. 161. Slain by Q. Labienus in Asia Minor, 191.
- Declamation, habits of, of the Romans, iv. 490; vi. 182. The schools of the rhetoricians, iv. 432. M. Annæus Seneca, the rhetorician, 433. Conventional rules for the declaimers, 434.
- Dediticii, the, of the Roman provincial population, i. 85.
- Delotarus, king of Galatia, his reply to Crassus, i. 414. Cicero applies to him for auxiliaries, ii. 56. Takes the side of Pompeius in the civil war, 187. Accompanies him in his flight, 242. Submits to Cæsar and brings aid to Calpurnius, 265, 272. Offers to assist the liberators under Cassius, iii. 109.
- Delotarus, king of Galatia, son of the foregoing, deserts Antonius for Octavius, iii. 249.
- Delotarus Philadelphus, king of Paphlagonia, favoured by Augustus, iv. 41.
- Delation, Delators, original import of the word, v. 180. Augustus institutes the office of public informer, 181. Passion of the Romans for accusation, 182. Delators encouraged by Tiberius, 186. Proposal of M. Lepidus for diminishing the rewards of the delators, 181. Tiberius checks delation, 182. Its progress, 201. Not employed by Caius, 304. Method adopted by the senate for checking delation, 420. Domitian's encouragement of delators, vii. 127. Character of his delators, 129. Memmius Regulus, the prince of delators, 130. The delators prosecuted by Nerva, 163.
- Deillus, Q., an Antonine officer, goes over to Octavius, iii. 250.
- Delos, state of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 358.
- Delphi, oracle of, in the time of Cæsar, ii. 217. Consulted by Nero, vi. 277.
- Demetrius, freedman of Pompeius, erects the Pompeian Theatre, i. 345.
- Demetrius, the Cynic, present at the death of Thrasea, vi. 173. Banished by Vespasian, vii. 82.
- Democracy, general result of the struggle between the aristocracy and, v. 96. The balance trimmed by the tact of Augustus, 97. More logical character of the policy of Tiberius, 97.
- Derecto, or Atargatis, treasures of the temple of, seized by Crassus, i. 415 *note* 1.
- Diablites, the, join a maritime confederacy against the Romans, i. 290.
- Diana, the Arician, strange story of the priesthood of, v. 326.
- Didius sent to Britain by Claudius, vi. 88. Retains without extending the Roman possessions in Britain, 88, 89.
- Didius, C., sent by Cæsar to the succour of Trebonius in Spain, ii. 306.
- Dido, queen of Carthage, pretended discovery of her treasures, vi. 154.
- Dion Cassius, his estimate of the character of Hadrian, vii. 391.
- Dion Chrysostomus, his remarks on the uncertainty of Roman history from the establishment of the empire quoted, iv. 87. His wanderings, vii. 143. Account of his history and writings, 365. His "Oration on the Alexandrians," 376.
- Dionysius the circumnavigator, accompanies Caius Cæsar to the East, iv. 214.
- Dribitorium, or Hall of Agrippa, remains roofless, vii. 118.
- Divico, the Helvetian chieftain, his interview with Cæsar, i. 248.
- Divine service among the Romans, ceremonies of, vi. 200.
- Divitiacus, vergobret of the Ædui, solicits the aid of Rome, i. 285. His character, 285. His intimacy with Cæsar and Cicero in Rome, i. 285. Successfully intercedes with Cæsar for his brother Dumnorix, 250. Sets forth the oppressions of the Sævi, 255. His usefulness in the hands of the Romans, 266. Assists Cæsar in his second campaign in Gaul, 270. At his intercession Cæsar pardons the Bellovaë, 271. Never acquires the use of the Latin idiom, iv. 81.
- Dolabella, Cn. Cornelius, impeached by Cæsar for malversation in his province of Macedonia, i. 96.
- Dolabella, P., son-in-law of Cicero, commands the Cæsarian naval forces off Illyricum, ii. 169. Defeated by Bibulus, 170. His intrigues repressed by Antonius, 270. Rebuked by Cæsar, 278. Gratified with a command in Africa, 306. Taken by Cæsar with him into Spain, 347. Death of his divorced wife Tullia, 362. Said to have conspired against Cæsar's life, 374. Joins the conspirators after Cæsar's murder, iii. 16. Appears in the senate with the consular fasces, 20. Accepted by Antonius as his colleague in the consulship, 46. Applauded by the nobles for his zeal in suppressing the Cæsarian outbreaks, 54. The government of Syria obtained by Antonius for him, 69, 73. Proceeds towards Syria, 94. Seizes and murders Trebonius, 110. Proclaimed an enemy of the state, 111. Driven to commit suicide at Laodicea, 128.
- Dolabella, proconsul of Africa, pacifies his

- province, v. 155. Joins the prosecution against his kinsman Q. Varus, 201.
- Domains, the public, as a source of revenue, iii. 419.
- Domitia Lepida, Nero's aunt, usually called Lepida, wife of Valerius Messala and mother of Messalina, has the charge of Nero during his mother's banishment; her rivalry with Agrippina, who makes Claudius put her to death, vi. 55.
- Domitia, consort of Domitian, her intrigue with the mime Paris, vii. 110. Divorced, but taken back, 111.
- Domitian, son of Vespasian, vi. 348. Takes refuge in the Capitol, 364, 368. Title of Caesar conferred on him by the Flavian traders; influence of Antonius Primus, 373, 374. Raised to the praetorship, 376. Joins the forces in Gaul, 403. Returns to Rome, 410. His vices, 378. Seeks to supplant his brother Titus, his accession, education, and temper, vii. 63-68. Recalls Agricola, 77, 78. Leads an expedition against the Chatti, and assumes the name of Germanicus, 83. Decees perpetual censor, 83. His confiscations, 84. His war with the Dacians, 89. His triumph, 90. His triumphal arch, and colonies, 92, 93. Appearance of a pretended Nero, 93. Revolt of Antonius Saturninus, 95. Domitian's terror and cruelties, 97. His character representative of the age, 99. Evidence against him, 100. Affects reformation of manners, 102. His zeal for the purity of the vestal virgins, 103. His enforcement of the law of adultery, of the Scantian law, and of the laws against mutilation, 106, 107. His edicts against the mimes, astrologers, and philosophers, 109-112. Assumes the censorship, and institutes reforms, 113. His edict respecting the cultivation of the vine, 115. His buildings, 117. Ascription of divine honours, 119, 120. Disrespect to the emperor treated as blasphemy, 121. Proscription of Jews and Christians, 125, 287. Encourages delators, 128. Favours the army and the populace, 131. His quinquennial contests in poetry, eloquence, and music (Agon Capitolinus), 133-135. Takes Minerva for his guardian, 135. Patronizes men of letters, 136. His dissimulation and moodiness, 139-143. Accused of poisoning Agricola, 145. His proscription of nobles, and banishment of philosophers, 146-148. His "reign of terror," 149. His danger and alarm, 150. Omens previous to his death, 151. Assassinated, 154. Indignities heaped on his memory, 162.
- Domitii, Nero's ancestors, family character of the, vi. 52-55.
- Domitilla, Domitian's niece, banished on a charge of Judaism, vii. 126.
- Domitius, consul, his treachery to Bituitus, i. 196.
- Domitius, L., Ahenobarbus, implicated by Vettius in a false charge of conspiracy, i. 175. Put forward for the consulship, 331. Opposes the first triumvirate, 331. Candidate for the consulship, and defeated, 335, 338. Elected, 338. Rebukes Gabinius' publicani for extortions, 338. Appointed Caesar's successor in Further Gaul, ii. 86. Occupies Carthago, 102, 103. Besieged, surrenders, and is generously treated by Caesar, 104-106. His ferocity, 107, 117. Defends Massilia, 127, 129, 142. Escapes, 173. Joins Pompeius, and is held in high estimation among the nobles, 190. Aspires to become Pontifex Maximus, and proposes sentence of death against all senators who did not join Pompeius, 226, 227. Commands the left wing at the battle of Pharsalia, 230. Slain in the pursuit, 235, 250. His praise by Lucan, 253.
- Domitius Afer, the orator, a delator, prosecutes Quintianus Varus, v. 201. His oratory, 412 *note* 1. His death, 412 *note* 1.
- Domitius Cn., Calpurnius, a candidate for the consulship, i. 360. Elected consul in the seventh month of the year, 438. Master of the horse to Caesar, ii. 306. Maintains a republican armament in the Jordan Gulf, iii. 119. Joins Antonius against Octavius, 182. Becomes consul, and takes part with Antonius, 238. Abandons Rome, and repairs to Antonius, 240. His defection and death, 249.
- Domitius, son of the preceding, commands the legions in Germany, iv. 236.
- Domitius, Cn., Ahenobarbus, marries Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus, v. 250. His son Nero (*see* Nero). His statue set up in the senate, vi. 84.
- Domitius, Cn., Corbulo, commands the legions in the East, under Nero, vi. 121.
- Dorilaus, prince of Galatia, takes the side of Pompeius in the civil war, ii. 187, 188.
- Drappes, a Gaulish chieftain, attacks the provinces, ii. 37. Shoots himself up in Uxellodunum, 37. Compelled to surrender to Caesar, 37.
- Druidism, invention of, claimed by the Kymry of Britain, i. 221. The meeting-place of the whole of the Gaelic tribes, 222. Essentially Oriental character of the Druidical system, 222. Existing monuments of Druidism in Gaul, 224. All-powerful authority of the Druids among the Carnutes, ii. 35. The Druids discomfited by Augustus, iv. 83. Their discontent, 83. Our scanty knowledge of Druidism, vi. 9. Disgrace and suspicion with which it was regarded by the Romans, 10. Its centres, temples, rites, and ceremonies, 10. Proscribed by Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius, 12. Its talisman, "the serpent's egg," 12. Retreat of the Druids to Anglesey, 41. Destruction of them and of their sacred groves, by Suetonius Paulinus, 42. Scorn thrown by Lucan on the Druidical doctrine of transmigration, 244 *note* 1. Triumphant anticipations of the Druids in A.D. 69, 399.
- Drusilla, daughter of Germanicus; marries Cassius Longinus, v. 250, 305. And again to M. Lepidus, 305. Passion of her brother Calus for her, and extravagant grief at her death, 305.
- Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa, vi. 419. Married to the prince of Emesa, but carried off by Felix, procurator of Judea, 423.

- Drusus**, son of Germanicus and Agrippina, affection of his cousin Drusus for him, v. 166. Commended by Tiberius to the senate, 177. Lays himself open to the machinations of Sejanus, 208. Retained by Tiberius at Capree, 216. His disgrace obtained by Sejanus, 216. Sent to Rome and placed under arrest, 216. Order to Macro respecting him, 223. His horrible sufferings and death, 236, 237.
- Drusus**, a pretender, arrested and executed, v. 235.
- Drusus**, younger son of Tiberius Drusus and Livia, iii. 218 *note*¹. His war with the Rhetians, Brenni, and Genauni, iv. 160. His character, 173. Administers the Gaulish provinces, 174. Consecrates an altar to Augustus at Lugdunum, 175. Invades Germany by sea and land, 178. His canal between the Rhine and Lake Flevis (Zuyder Zee), 179. Failure of his first expedition, 180. His second campaign, 180. Erects the fort of Aliso on the Lippe, 181. Obtains an ovation, 181. His third campaign and death, 184. Monument to him at Moguntiacum, 185. His remains brought to Rome, 186. Received by Augustus, who pronounces his funeral oration and places his ashes in the Mausoleum Augusti, 186. His campaigns partially unsuccessful, but permanent in their results, 186, 187.
- Drusus**, Tiberius Claudius, youngest son of the preceding. *See* Claudius.
- Drusus**, son of Tiberius and Vipsania, introduced by his father to the citizens in the forum, iv. 236. Pronounces the funeral oration over the body of Augustus, v. 15. Date of his birth uncertain, 23. Sent to quell the meeting of the Pannonian legions, 19. Sent to Illyricum, 52. Lives in amity with Germanicus, 53. Effects the ruin of Maroboduus, 54. His wife Livilla has two sons at a birth, 73. Meets the funeral procession of Germanicus, 73. His blunt demeanour, 78. Consul with his father Tiberius, 164. His character, 166. The tribunitian power conferred on him in conjunction with his father, 171. Machinations of Sejanus against him; their mutual hostility, 175. Poisoned by Sejanus and Livilla, 176.
- Drusus**, son of Claudius, v. 399.
- Ducenarii**, duties of the, iii. 401.
- Dumnorix**, the *Adum*, succeeds his brother Divitiacus as *vergo*ret, i. 239. Won over by the Helvetian Orgetorix, 239, 245. His life spared by Caesar, 250. Commands the auxiliary cavalry under Caesar, 251. His restless intrigues, 268, 385. His death, 385.
- Duras**, or *Diurpaneus*, chief of the Dacians, perhaps the same as *Decabulus*, vii. 87. *See* *Decabulus*.
- Duratus**, a chief of the *Pietones*, holds the city of *Lemonum* for the Romans, ii. 36.
- Durocororum**, assembly of Gaulish tribes convened by Caesar at, i. 405.
- Dumnorix perduellionis**, i. 197 *note*³.
- Dyrrachium**, Cicero's residence at, i. 819. Its importance as a place of commerce, 820.
- EARTHENWARE** of the ancients, iv. 317.
- E** Earthquake, destroys twelve cities of Lesser Asia, v. 146. One in Rome in A.U. 800, 449. Pompeii partly destroyed by one, vii. 57. The great earthquake at Antioch in A.D. 115, 299.
- Eboracum**, or York, importance of, at the time of the Roman dominion, vii. 245.
- Eburones**, their country overrun by the Cimbri and Teutones, i. 202. Their character in the time of Caesar, 225. Join the confederacy against the Romans, 267. Destroy two Roman legions, 393. Attack Q. Cicero's camp, 394. Routed by Caesar, 396.
- "*Eclogues*" of Virgil, remarks on the, iv. 440.
- Edessa**, city of, capital of the kingdom of Osroene, i. 418.
- Edicts** of Augustus, iii. 377. Character of the perpetual edicts of the prætors, vii. 426. And of the provincial edicts of the præfects, 426.
- Education**, system of, of the Romans, independent of priests or magistrates, vi. 180. Its extent and liberality, 180. High training of public men at Rome under the free state, 181. Not materially lower under the empire, 181. Declamation, 182. Freedom of writing, 188. Liberality of Vespasian, vii. 28.
- Egnatius Rufus**, charged with conspiracy against the life of Augustus, iv. 187.
- Egypt**, claims of the Roman republic to the kingdom of, i. 105. Application of Ptolemæus Auletes, king of Egypt, for restoration to his kingdom, 327. Competition of Roman nobles for the commission to settle Egyptian affairs, 328. Accession of Ptolemæus XII. and his sister Cleopatra, ii. 243. Their quarrels, 244. Caesar's arrival in Egypt, 253. Object of his interference in the affairs of this country, 254. The battle of the Nile, 263. The Ptolemies permitted by the Romans to reign in Egypt, iii. 273. Reduced by Octavius to the form of a province under his own control, 279. Resources of Egypt under the last of the Ptolemies, 280. First political intercourse of the Romans with Egypt, iv. 94. Its rapid reduction by them, 94. Neglect of the resources and defences of Egypt by the later Ptolemies, 101. Improvements of the præfect Petronius, 102. Who defends the province from an attack of the Ethiopians, 102. Ælius Gallus appointed præfect, 103. The corn-fleets of Egypt, 315. Population of Egypt at the time of Augustus, 342. Egyptian rites in Rome suppressed by Tiberius, v. 150; vi. 202. Exploration of the country 900 miles above Syene in the reign of Nero, vi. 268. Severe measures against the Jews in Egypt, vii. 284. Jewish insurrection in the reign of Trajan, 309-311.
- Eleazar**, a chief of the Zealots in Jerusalem, vi. 429. His revolutionary proceedings, 448. Occupies the inner enclosure of the Temple, 449. Assassinated, 450.
- Elements**, Syrian worship of the, attractive to the lower order of women at Rome, vi. 190.

- Elephants, use of, in battle in Africa, ii. 293.
Honour of riding an elephant in Rome, iii. 299.
- Ennia, wife of Macro, and mistress of Caius Caesar, v. 253. Compelled by Caius to destroy herself, 302, 303.
- Ennius, Q., introduces the poetry of Greece into Rome, ii. 402.
- Ennius, a knight, denounced for converting an image of the emperor into plate for his table, and acquitted, v. 127.
- Ephesus, temple of, plundered by Scipio, ii. 215. Saved by Caesar from a second spoliation, 233. The principal metropolis of Lower Asia, iv. 105. Limits of the sacred precincts of the temple at various periods, 106. State of Ephesus in the time of Augustus, 360.
- Epichurus, his conspiracy to carry off Agrippa Posthumus and Julia from their places of exile, iv. 256.
- Epicharis, a Grecian freedwoman, active in Piso's conspiracy, vi. 147. Arrested, 147. Her fortitude and suicide, 149.
- Epictetus teaches at Nicopolis in Epirus, vii. 148.
- Epicleureanism, great principle of, ii. 352. Its fatal influence upon the principles of faith and morals, 401. Character of the Epicleureans in the time of Trajan, vii. 254.
- Epidanus, an ancient name of Dyrrachium, i. 320.
- Epigrams, Latin, vii. 231.
- "Epistles from the Euxine" of Ovid, remarks on the, v. 462.
- Epulones, duties of the, iii. 871.
- Era, the Julian, establishment of the, ii. 340.
- Esquiline Hill, the, i. 18; iv. 370, 375. Gardens of Maecenas on the, 198.
- Ethiopians, the, attack Egypt, iv. 102. Defeated by Petronius, 102. Released by Augustus from payment of a tribute, 103.
- Etna, eruption of, in a.c. 32, iii. 239 *note* 1.
- Etruscans, their preparations against Rome, i. 190. Invasion of Etruria by the Gauls, 190. Perfidy of the Gauls, 190. Coalition of the Etruscans with the Samnites, Umbrians, and Cisalpine Gauls, 190. Defeat of the coalition at Sentinum, 191. The ruling idea of the Etruscan institutions, ii. 394. Internal corruption of the Etruscans, 398.
- Euhemerus, the *Ἰερα Ἀναγράφη* of, translated into Latin by Ennius, ii. 402.
- Exedares, son of Factorus II., king of Parthia, placed on the throne of Armenia, vii. 298. Dethroned by his uncle Choarces, 298.
- Excise duties under the empire, iii. 424.
- FABERIUS**, one of Caesar's secretaries, his forgeries, iii. 51.
- Fabicius, C., ordered by Caesar to occupy the passes of the Pyrenees, ii. 180. His spirited advance to the valley of the Sicoris, 183. Granted a triumph, 357.
- Fabius Maximus, defeats the Allobroges and Arverni, i. 196. Chosen *princeps* of the senate, iii. 353.
- Fabius Maximus, his death, iv. 282.
- Fabius Sanga, patron of the Allobroges, persuades them to reveal Catilina's conspiracy to Cicero, i. 210.
- Fadus, Cuspius, the first procurator of Judea, vi. 420.
- Falantius, a knight, charged with constructive treason, v. 125.
- Fannius, C., covets the villa of Atticus, ii. 225. Joins Sextus Pompeius, but finally abandons him, iii. 204.
- Fannius, C., his work on the victims of Nero, the "Exitus Oecisorum aut Relegatorum," vii. 244.
- Fannius, his paper manufactory in Rome, iv. 316 *note*.
- "Fasti" of Ovid, remarks on the, iv. 463.
- Faustina, Anna, daughter of Antoninus Pius, married to M. Aurelius, vii. 396, 399. Her infidelity, 468. Her death, 472.
- Faustina, Anna Galeria, wife of Antoninus Pius, vii. 396. Her licentious character, 469. Her endowments for orphans, 469.
- Faustus Sulla, son of the dictator; joins Cato at Patrae, ii. 258. Slain in Africa, 302, 303.
- Favonius, C., leads the oligarchy against Caesar, i. 342. Joins the conspirators in the Capitol, iii. 12.
- Favonius, M., "Cato's shadow," i. 151. Opposes the prolongation of Caesar's command, 343. Commands a detachment of the Pompeian army in Macedonia, ii. 216. His remark on the protraction of the war, 225. Accompanies Pompeius in his flight, 242. Joins the liberators, iii. 12, 70.
- Favorinus, the rhetorician, and the emperor Hadrian, story of, vii. 349.
- Felix, brother of Pallas, procurator of Judea, v. 431; vi. 206 *note* 2 423, 424. Comparative tranquillity of the country during his government, 423. His career, 425.
- Fenius Rufus, praetorian prefect, vi. 118. A friend of Agrippina's, 119. Takes part in Piso's conspiracy, 145. His treachery and condemnation, 149.
- Festivals, sacred, administration of the, iii. 371.
- Festus, Porcius, his government of Judea, vi. 424.
- Fidene, fall of an amphitheatre at, v. 300.
- Finances of Rome, iii. 417. Objects of public expenditure under the commonwealth, 417. And under the empire, 417. Sources of revenue, 410-420. Taxes, 424. The public ararium and the emperor's fiscus, 425.
- Fires in ancient Rome, iv. 407; vi. 123. Great fire on the Caelian hill, v. 201. The Great Fire in the reign of Nero, vi. 128-137. The fire in the reign of Titus, vii. 50.
- Firmus, Plotius, chosen prefect of the praetorians, vii. 312. His proposal to Otho, 336.
- Fiscus of the emperor, and the public ararium, iii. 425.
- Fisheries, revenue derived from, iii. 423.
- Flaccus, Avilius, Roman Governor at Alexandria, insults the Jews, and causes a riot, v. 310. His disgrace, 311.
- Flaccus, Fulvius, his wars against the Salyi, i. 196.
- Flaccus, Verrius, his school in Rome, vi. 56.

- Flaminian Circus, speeches of Pompeius, Crassus, and Cicero delivered in the, i. 150.
- Flaminian Way, ii. 100; iv. 386.
- Flaminius wounded by the Ligurians, i. 195.
- Flavian or Antonine period of Roman history, character of the, vii. 7. Moral aspect of the Flavian reaction, 220. Effect of this reaction on the tone of Roman literature, 222.
- Flavius, the renegade brother of Arminius, v. 88. Their parley across the Weser, 88. His son Italicus made king of the Cherusci, vi. 13.
- Flavius put to death by Domitian, for his Judaism or Christianity, his sons educated by Quintilian, vii. 126.
- Flavius, the tribune, his agrarian bill, i. 160. Throws the consul Metellus into prison, 162.
- Flavus Subrinus, claims the honour of assassinating Nero, vi. 146.
- Flevus, Lake (Zuyder Zee), canal of Drusus from, to the Rhine, iv. 179.
- Florus, Gessius, appointed procurator of Judea, vi. 425. Sends to Jerusalem a force which capitulates and is massacred, 426. The governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, defeated before the city, 426. Death of Florus in consequence, 427.
- Florus, Julius, the Gaul, heads a revolt against the Romans, v. 167. Defeated, he falls upon his sword, 168.
- Fonteinus, proconsul in Transalpine; defended by Cicero against the complaints of the Gauls, i. 73. Impeached for malversation, and defended by Cicero, 208.
- Fontelus Capito, commander of Lower Germany, claims the empire, vi. 266. His death, 295.
- Fontelus Agrippa expels the Dacians from Mesia, vii. 56.
- Foreigners, antipathy of the Romans to, i. 19.
- Forests, revenue derived from, iii. 423.
- Fortresses of the Romans in the provinces, vii. 445.
- Forum Boarium described, iv. 384.
- Forum Gallorum, battle between the Republicans and Antonians at, iii. 117.
- Forum Hadriani, colony of, founded, vii. 243.
- Forum Julii, foundation of the, ii. 68. Dedication of the, 313.
- Forum Julii, junction of the forces of Antonius and Lepidus at, iii. 126.
- Forum Romanum described, iv. 380. Its enlargement and decoration, 382. The forum of the Cæsars, 383. Assassination of the Emperor Galba in the, vi. 311. The new forum of the Emperor Vespasian, vii. 27. The equestrian colossus of Domitian in the forum, 91.
- Forum, the Ulpian, account of the, vii. 201.
- Franchise, Latin. See Latin Franchise.
- Freedmen, wealth of, under the republic, iv. 158. Regimen of the freedmen under Claudius, v. 402. Triumph of the senators over the freedmen, vii. 436.
- Frisli, the, compelled to become allies of the Romans under Drusus, iv. 181, 206. Join the revolt under Civilis, vi. 387.
- Frontinus, Julius, his government of Britain, vii. 70.
- Fronto, Cornelius, attends M. Aurelius as an adviser, vii. 460.
- Fucinus, Lake, drained by Claudius, v. 392.
- Spectacle of a sea-fight on the lake, 395.
- Fufian law repealed, i. 179.
- Fulcinus Trio, obtrudes himself into the prosecution of Cn. Piso, v. 79, 82. Accuses Libo Drusus, 90.
- Fulvia, wife successively of P. Clodius, the younger Curio, and M. Antonius, ii. 847. Her daughter Clodia married to Octavius, iii. 141. Her fiendish influence over Antonius, 155. Her ferocity towards Cicero's remains, 148. Incites L. Antonius to rise against Octavius, 173. Flies to Athens, 181. Dies at Sicyon, 182.
- Furius Camillus. See Camillus.
- Fuscus, Cornelius, prætorian prefect, routed and slain in the Dacian war, vii. 83, 140.
- GABINIUS, A., author of the *Lex Gabinia*, investing Pompeius with the command of the Mediterranean coasts, i. 74, 176. His dancing, '84. Elected consul, 176. His scornful treatment of Cicero, 183. Clodius assigns to him the province of Syria, 305, 306. Detached from Clodius by Pompeius, 321. Attacked by Cicero in his speech de *Provinciis Consularibus*, 337. Recalled in consequence, 337. His transactions in Syria, 349. Resolves to restore Ptolemæus Auletes to the throne of Egypt, 349. Supports Hyrcanus in Judea, and chastises the Arabs, 350. Obtains the title of Imperator, but is refused a supplication, 350. Restores Ptolemæus Auletes, 352; ii. 188. Succeeded by Crassus, 353. Threatened with impeachment by L. Domitius, 353. Impeached and acquitted, 354-356. Accused of extortion in Syria and defended by Cicero, condemned and banished, 356. Returns to Rome, ii. 192. Joins Cæsar, 266. His death at Salona, 266.
- Gadara, its contributions to Greek science, iii. 294.
- Gades the temple of Hercules at, rifled by Varro, ii. 161. Entrusted to the care of C. Gallonius, 161. Gallonius driven out by the citizens, 162. Upon whom the Latin franchise is conferred by Cæsar, 163.
- Galatia, colonization of, i. 188. Taken by Augustus and formed into a province, iv. 110.
- Gaul, the, contrasted with the Kymry, i. 217-219.
- Gallia Cisalpina, i. 82. Regarded with jealousy by the Romans, 82. The government of, coveted, 85.
- Galba, Servius Sulp., entrusted by the senate with the command in Gaul, v. 354. Confirmed in his command by Claudius, 378. His family and character; offered the empire on the death of Caligula, vi. 279. Prediction of Augustus that he will be emperor, 280. Declared Imperator by his soldiers, 281. Accepted by the senate, 293. His severity and unpopularity on entering Rome, 295. Assumes the consulship, 296. Adopts Piso as his colleague,

298. Refuses his soldiers a donative, 301. Offends the Romans by sparing Tigellinus, 302. His parsimony, 302. Otho conspires against him, 306. Deserted by his soldiers, 307. His irresolution and death, 308-310. His character as a proconsul and Roman soldier, 312. Founders the colony of Augusta Trevirorum on the Moselle, 337.

Galba, Servius, a Casarcan officer in Gaul, his campaign in the Valais, i. 286. Takes Octodurus, capital of the Veragri, 287. His failure and retreat into the province, 289.

Galba, a senator, killed by Caesar's mutinous soldiers, ii. 282.

Galeria, wife of Vitellius, left with her children at Rome, vi. 339, 340 *note* 1. Her moderation in prosperity, 343.

Galerianus, son of Piso Licinianus, put to death by Mucianus, vi. 376.

Galerius Trachalus, consul at the death of Nero, vi. 292.

Gulgaues, his battle with Agricola, vii. 74.

Galilee, insurrection in, put down by Quadratus, prefect of Syria, vi. 422. Operations of Vespasian in Galilee, 429. The defence of the country entrusted to Josephus, 430.

Gallio M. Junius (the Gallio of Acts xviii. 12), vi. 162 *note* 1.

Gallionius, C., entrusted by Varro with the cure of Gades, ii. 161.

Gallus, Julius, his expedition against the Arabians, iv. 95-101. Appointed by Augustus prefect of Egypt, 101.

Gallus, Asinius, marked by Augustus among the competitors for empire, v. 10. Marries Vipsania, the divorced wife of Tiberius; his long imprisonment, and execution, 217.

Gallus, Cestius. *See* Cestius.

Gallus, Cornelius, refuses to admit Antonius into Praetorium, iii. 263. Appointed by Octavianus to the government of Egypt, 279. Jealousy of Augustus of him, his literary character, disgrace, and suicide, iv. 52.

Gallus, Herennius, sent by Hordeonius against the revolted legions and beaten, vi. 391. Beaten by his soldiers, 393. Killed by them, 398.

Gallus, Nonius, *legatus* in the Spanish war, iv. 62. Defeats the Treviri, 70.

Gallus, Publius, interdicted fire and water by Nero, vi. 159.

Games of chance, Augustus's fondness for, iv. 228.

Games, quinquennial, of Neapolis, iv. 363.

Games of the circus. *See* Circus.

Ganymedes assassinated Achilles the Egyptian general, ii. 260. His tyranny in Alexandria, 262.

Gardens of Maecenas, on the Esquiline Hill, iv. 198. The gardens of Rome, 409.

Gauls, rumours of their commotions in B.C. 60, i. 162. Their early conquests in Europe and Asia, 167. Their coalition with the Italians, 190. Defeated at Sentinum, 191. Coalesce with Hannibal, 192. Cisalpine Gaul reduced to a province of Rome, 192. Destroy Placentia, under Hamilcar, 192. Transalpine Gaul formed into a province, 196. Overrun by the Cimbric and Teu-

tonea, 201. Oppressed by the Romans, the Transalpine side with the Mariani, 207. The conquest of Gaul a distinct episode in Roman history, 211. Sources of its ethnology, and quadruple division of its races, 212. Origin of the Gauls proper, 213. Nations forming the great confederation of the Gauls, 214. Their division into the Gael and Kymry, physiologically distinguished, 216, 217. Further marks of their distinction, 218-224. Their religious ideas, 221. The Gallic territory penetrated in the south by some of the Belgic tribes, 227. Hostility between the Gauls and Germans, 227. Their general character and population, 227. Their eagerness to pay their court to Caesar after his victory over the Helvetii, 234. Apply to Caesar for aid against the Suevi, 236-236. Delivered by him, 261. Review of the state of Gaul after Caesar's first campaign, 265. The Romans and Gauls compared in a military point of view, 282-285. Ordinary route of the Roman armies into Gaul, 287. State of Gaul in B.C. 58, 287. Caesar's fourth campaign, 287. General spirit of disaffection of the Gauls, 390. Revolt under Indutiomarus, 397. Caesar's leniency to the conquered states, ii. 7. The Gaulish democracies favourably disposed to him, 9. Wealth of the Gauls, 10. Flatter themselves with revived hopes of recovering their independence, 11. Fresh disturbances, 11-13. Their formation of an extensive confederacy under Vercingetorix, 12. Change their plan of warfare, and destroy their towns, 16, 17. Are defeated, 29. Their camp at Alesia broken up, 29-32. Further disturbances, 35. Final pacification of Gaul, and results of Caesar's Gallic war, 39. Pictures from the ancient writers of the state to which Gaul was reduced, 39. Caesar's conciliatory treatment of the Gauls, 66. Progress of Roman sentiments in Gaul, 114. Full citizenship obtained by Caesar for the Transalpine Gauls, 138. Affairs of Gaul after the final departure of Caesar, iv. 69. Pacification of the Aquitani, the Treviri, and the Morini, 70, 71. Harsh treatment of the Gauls during the triumvirate, 71. Policy of Augustus in the organization of Gaul, 72. Organization of the provincia Narbonensis, 73. The provincia Lugdunensis, 75. Extent to which self-government was accorded to the Gaulish states, 76. Functions of their popular assemblies, 79. Political importance of the military roads, 79. Progress of Roman civilization in Gaul, 85. The Druids discontinued by Augustus, 88. Introduction of the Roman polytheism, 84. Worship of Augustus in Gaul, 84. Discontent of the Druids, 85. Operations for securing the passes of the Alps, 87. The Gauls induced by Drusus to erect an altar to Augustus and Rome at Lugdunum, iv. 175. Population of Gaul within and beyond the Alps, 349, 351. Revolt in Gaul in A.D., 21, v. 167. Crushed by Silius, 169. State of Gaul at the close of the reign of Tiberius, 264. The career of honours opened

- to the Gauls by Claudius, 384; vi. 9. Disaffection spread among the Gaulish states by Civilis, 387. Triumphant anticipations of the revolted Gauls, 399. Fresh forces directed upon Gaul by Mucianus and Domitian, 403. Neglect of the Gauls to defend the entrance to their country, 404. Reasoned with by Cerealis, 406. Extinction of the national spirit among them, 418. Journey of Hadrian into Gaul, vii. 848.
- Gellius, consul, defeated by Spartacus, i. 51. Deposed from his command, 51.
- Gemara, the, estimation in which it was held in the Jewish schools, vii. 283.
- Genabum, massacre of the Romans by the Gauls at, ii. 12. Taken by Cæsar and abandoned to fire and sword, 16.
- Genauni, the, defeated by Drusus, iv. 160.
- Geneva, the frontier town of the Allobroges, i., 241.
- "Georgics" of Virgil, iv. 440. Their moral grandeur, 441.
- Gergovia, menaced by Vercingetorix, ii. 15. Cæsar defeated at, 23.
- Germanicus, son of Drusus, adopted into the Julian family, iv. 221. His games in honour of his father, 250. Entrusted with the command of the new levies sent into Pannonia, 251. His high promise and first successes, 254. His complete subjugation of the rebels in the province between the Adriatic and the Danube, 255. Marries Agrippina, granddaughter of Augustus, 256, 279. Honours granted to him by Augustus, 265. In the camp of his uncle Tiberius, in Germany, 277. Becomes consul, 278. Birth of his son Calus, 279. Recommended by Augustus to the protection of the senate, 279. His popularity, 282. Suppresses a mutiny of the legions on the Rhine, v. 21, 22. Sketch of his character, 29. Jealousy of Tiberius of the popularity of Germanicus, 26. Germanicus leads the legions across the Rhine, 30. His operations in A.D. 15, 31. The title of Imperator conferred on him, 32. Revisits the scene of the slaughter of Varus, 32. Attacks Arminius in an undecided engagement, 34. His misfortune on his return by sea, 35. Murmurs of the emperor at the slender results of the German campaigns, 36. Third campaign of Germanicus in A.D. 16, 37. Confronts the German forces on the Weser, 38. Gains a great victory over them, 40. Returns again unsuccessful, 43. Recovers the Varian eagles, 44. Recalled by the emperor to Rome, 47. His triumph, 48. Sent on a mission to the East, 50. His travels in the East, 57. Insolence of the new proconsul of Syria, Cn. Calpurnius Piso, to him, 63. Germanicus crowns Zeno king of Armenia, 63. Visits Egypt, 64. Displeasure of his uncle Tiberius, 65. Returns to Syria, 66. His regulations and appointments overruled in his absence by Piso, 66. His illness, 66. Charges Piso and his wife Plancia with having poisoned him, 67. His death, 67. Reflections on his character, 68. Fondly compared to Alexander the Great, 69.
- Suspensions of his having been poisoned, 69. Indecent exultation of Piso at his death, 70. Sympathy of the Romans for him, 72. Demonstrations of grief on his death, 73. Arrival of his remains in Rome, 73. Funeral honours paid them by the people, 74. Reserved demeanour of Tiberius and Livia on the occasion, 74. Fate of his family, 214.
- Germany, invaded by Drusus, iv. 178. Failure of his first campaign, 180. His second expedition, 181. Campaigns of Tiberius, 189, 287-240. Expeditions of Domitian, and of Vinicius, 287. Hesitation of Augustus in the prosecution of the conquest of Germany, 241. Final subjugation of Germany to the Roman yoke, 266. Fancied security of the Roman administration in Germany, 267. Varus appointed to the command of the legions in Germany, 269. Bloodless campaign of Tiberius in A.D. 11, 277. Political characteristics of the people of Germany, 295. The Rhine crossed by Germanicus, v. 30. His operations in A.D. 15, 31. And in A.D. 16, 37. The Germans, under Arminius, defeated in a great battle, 40. Their resistance gradually crumbles away, 264. Meeting of the legions in Upper Germany, vi. 293. Revolt of the Germans under Civilis, 385, *et seq.* Attitude of the German tribes towards Rome at the commencement of the reign of Domitian, vii. 80. Journey of Hadrian into Germany, 848. *See also* Teutones.
- Geta, their capacity for civilization; of cognate origin with the Dacians, vii. 182.
- Glabrio, Acllius, lately consul, accused of fighting with wild beasts, vii. 125, 174. Exiled, 126.
- Gladiators of Batiatus, i. 50. Their revolt under Spartacus, 50. Their defeat, and death of their leader, 52. Cæsar's band at Capua broken up by the senate, ii. 101. Cæsar's exhibition of gladiatorial shows, 312. Bloodiness of Calus's gladiatorial shows, v. 300. Those of Claudius, 394. Outbreak of gladiators at Praneste, vi. 143.
- Gold, uses of, amongst the Greeks and Romans, iv. 317.
- Golden house of Nero, iv. 185. The greater part demolished by Vespasian, vii. 28, 33, 267.
- Gomphi, city of, sacked by Cæsar, ii. 224.
- Government, the imperial, formed by the combination of several distinct republican prerogatives, iii. 343. Their character and functions, 344, *et seq.* Alliance of philosophy with government at Rome, vi. 183.
- Governments of the ancients:—1. Parthia and the East: the spirit of monarchical rule, iv. 295. 2. Germany and the North: the spirit of personal liberty, 295. 3. Greece and Rome in the West: the spirit of municipal government, 296.
- Gracchi, agrarian laws of the, i. 26.
- Gracchus, Sempronius, purmour of the elder Julia, slain by order of Tiberius, v. 29.
- Gracinus Laco, captain of the urban police, assists Macro in the arrest of Sejanus, v. 224-226.

Gramscian, battle of the, between Agricola and Calpurnius, vii. 75.

Granius Marcellus, praetor of Bithynia, accused of reflections on Tiberius, acquitted but condemned for extortion, v. 126.

Greece; degraded state of intellect and morals in Greece in the sixth century A.C. ii. 399. Decay and fall of the Greek religion, 400. Fatal influence of the philosophy of the Greeks upon the principles of faith and morals of the Romans, 401. Beneficial effects of Greek philosophy confined to a small class, 416. Influence of Greeks on Roman literature, 417. Progress of the Hellenic element among the population of Palestine, iii. 292. Greek colonization in Palestine, 293. General diffusion of the Greek language in Western Asia, 294. Influence of Greek civilization upon Jewish ideas, 295. Political characteristics of Greece, iv. 295. Uses of gold and silver in Greece, 317. State of the cities of Greece under Augustus, 330, *et seq.* The freedom of Greece proclaimed by Nero, vi. 270. His project for cutting through the Isthmus of Corinth, 271. Plunders Greece of her monuments of art, 276. Again reduced to a province by Vespasian, vii. 22.

Greek language, its prevalence in the eastern provinces of the empire, and its general use at Rome, iv. 299, 300.

Gregory, Pope, legend of, in connection with Trajan, vii. 293.

Guilds of trades, or colleges, in Rome, restored by Claudius, i. 178. Trajan's jealousy of guilds or trade combinations, vii. 213.

HADRIANUS AFER, father of the emperor Hadrian, vii. 323.

Hadrianus, Publius Aelius, his birth and parentage, vii. 321. Synoptical view of his connection with Trajan, 323 *note*¹. His education and accomplishments, 323. Rises, under Trajan's patronage, to the consulship, 325. Married to Sabina, daughter of Matidia, 326. Popularly designated heir to the empire, 327. Rumours about the succession at the death of Trajan, 328. Hadrian said to have been adopted by Trajan on his death-bed, 329. Confirmation of his succession by the senate and the army, 330. Relinquishes Trajan's conquests beyond the Euphrates, 331. Repairs to Rome, and celebrates Trajan's triumph, 332. His endowments for the alimentation of poor children, 333. Uncertainty of the dates of his reign, 334. Dangers from the frontiers of Mauretania, Dacia, and Britain, 334. Hadrian's campaign in Maesia, 335. Suppression of a conspiracy formed against him during his absence, 336. His alleged intention of abandoning Dacia, 336. Courts the senate, 337. His popular manners, 339. His occasional jealousy and envy, 339. Undertakes to make himself personally acquainted with all the provinces, 341. His assiduity in performing the duties of a military chief, and in maintaining discipline, 342. His progress into Gaul and

Germany, 343. And into Britain, 343-349. Terms on which he lived with Sabina, 350. Visits Spain, and erects a basilica at Nemausus, in honor of Plotina, 350. Visits and tranquilizes Mauretania, 351. And Parthia, 352. His sojourn at Athens, 352. Returns to Rome, and visits Sicily and Carthage, 352. His second progress, 353. His residence at Alexandria and Athens, 353. His works for the embellishment of Athens, 354. Regarded by the Athenians with the title of Olympius, 357. Initiated into the mysteries at Eleusis, 360. Tolerates the Christian faith, 362. Dissatisfied with the conservative spirit of Athens, 370. Crosses over to Alexandria, 370. His account of the Alexandrians, 372. Interest taken by him in the dogmatic teaching of the Jews and Christians, 373. Death of his favourite, Antinous, 375. His visit to Tiberias, 377. And to Antioch, which disgusts him with its frivolity and voluptuousness, 378. Continues his progress through Asia Minor, 379. Once more revisits Athens, and takes up his residence at Rome, 381. Establishes the Athenæum at Rome, 381. His buildings in the city, 382. Adapts for a successor L. Ceionius Commodus Verus, 383. Premature death of Verus, 387. Hadrian chooses for his successor T. Aurelius Antoninus, and requires him to adopt M. Annus Verus and L. Verus, 387. His increasing infirmities and irritation, 389. His death, 389. Estimate of his character, 390. His reign the best of the imperial series, 392. His figure and countenance, 393.

Hannibal, his Gaulish auxiliaries, i. 192.

Helena, queen of Adiabene, converted to Judaism, vi. 421.

Hellopolis, closing of the Jewish temple at, vii. 285.

Helius, a freedman of Nero, governs Rome during Nero's absence in Greece, vi. 276.

Helvetii, their preparations for a national emigration, i. 161, 192, 240. Their territory, 214. Their numbers in the time of Caesar, 230. Their restlessness, 238. Embrace in their league the Rauraci, the Tullingi, and the Latobrigi, 240. Their choice between two routes into Gaul, 240. Their chosen route, 241. Prevented by Caesar from crossing the Rhone at Geneva, 244. Adopt the other route on the right bank of the Rhone, 245. The Tiguri defeated by Caesar, 247. Overtures of the Helvetians to Caesar, 248. March through the country of the Edui, 249. Engaged by Caesar in a decisive battle, and entirely defeated, 251. Compelled to return to their own country, 253.

Helvidius Priscus, his bravery, vi. 166. Charged with dereliction of his senatorial duties, 171. His punishment, 172. Proposes the restoration of the Capitol, 374. His intemperate opposition to Vespasian, his exile and death, vii. 31.

Heniochi, the, compelled to submit to Trajan, vii. 303.

Herculeum, swallowed up by streams of lava, vii. 33, 56.

- Hermunduri, a tribe of interior Germany, transplanted into the vacant seats of the Marcomanni, iv. 237. Attack the Quadi and Marcomanni, and contest with the Chatti the salt mines on the Saale, vii. 85.
- Herod the Great, son of Antipater the Idumean, obtains the kingdom of Judea, iii. 190. Governs Galilee, under the protection of Sextus Cæsar, 301, 303. The national spirit roused against him, 302. Remark of Sameas, or Shammai, respecting him, 302. Confirmed by Cassius in the government of Cœle-Syria, 303. Pays court to Antonius, and marries Mariamne, 303, 304. Receives the kingdom of Judea, 305. Cuts off the Asmonean princes, 305. Rejects the advances of Cleopatra, 307. Confirmed in his kingdom by Octavius, 292, 307. His love and jealousy of Mariamne, 306. Causes her to be murdered, 308. His remorse at her death, 308. His public works in Jerusalem and obsequiousness to Rome, 309. Favoured by Agrippa, iv. 118. Additions made to his territory by Augustus, 114. Guaranteed from interference of the governor of Syria, 114. Visits Agrippa in Syria, 162. His sons Aristobulus and Alexander, 162. Leads Agrippa through Judea, 163. His death, 216. His will confirmed by Calus Cæsar, 216. Division of his kingdom among his sons, v. 269. His family at Rome, 274.
- Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, tetrarch of Galilee with Perœa, v. 269. Marries Herodias, and has the sovereignty of Samaria given to him, 277, 278. Banished, 312.
- Herod Agrippa, a younger son of Herod the Great, supports Vespasian, vi. 350.
- Herod Agrippa, son of Aristobulus, educated at Rome, v. 276. Attaches himself to Calus Cæsar, whom he inspires with love for Eastern customs and despotism, 277-280. Arrested by Tiberius, but released on the accession of Calus, 288. The sovereignty of a part of Palestine given to him by the emperor Calus, 302. Quits Rome for Galilee, 303. Causes disturbances at Alexandria, 309. Has Samaria added to his dominions, 312. Pleads for the Jews with Calus, 319. Buries Calus, 365. Aids Claudius in obtaining the empire, 367. Judea added to his kingdom, 380. His popularity with the Jews, 380. His death at Caesarea, 381. His four children, 417.
- Herod Agrippa, son of the preceding, kept in honourable custody at Rome, v. 381; vi. 419. Has the sovereignty of part of Palestine given him by Claudius, 423. Employed as a spy upon the Jews in Jerusalem, 424.
- Herodes, king of Chalcis, vi. 419.
- Herodes Atticus, his wealth, eloquence, and munificence at Athens, vii. 363. Alleged cause of his death, 363.
- Herodias, daughter of Aristobulus, forsakes her husband Philippos, and marries Herod Antipas, v. 277, 278. Shares Herod's exile voluntarily, 312.
- "Heroids" of Ovid, remarks on the, iv. 402.
- Herophilus, or Amatius, asserts his descent from Marius, iii. 48. Banished from Rome by Cæsar, 48. Put to death by M. Antonius, 49.
- Hesus, the Gallic Mars, i. 223; iv. 84.
- Hirrus, Luccellus, an unsuccessful candidate for a place in the college of augurs, ii. 53. Sent by Pompeius on a mission to Parthia, 189. His fears of being thrust aside, 226. Thrown into chains by the king of Parthia, 242.
- Hirtius, A., a friend of Cæsar, author of the seventh book of the commentaries on the Gallic war, ii. 352. Designated consul for A.U. 711, 365; iii. 82, 105. Marches to the Cisalpine, 105. Attacks Antonius, 108. Slain in an engagement before Mutina, 119.
- "Historia Augusta," the series of the imperial biographies known by the name of the, vii. 321 *note* 1.
- Historians of the Flavian age, examination of their works, vii. 233. The writings of Tacitus more biographical than historical, 241. Historical importance of the prince's personal character, 242. Hence the biographies of Suetonius supply the place of history, 242. Popularity of historical writing under Trajan, 248. Want of a critical spirit in historical writing combined with acute criticism on grammar, 245. Preference of the Romans for biography to history, 246.
- Horace, Q., Flaccus, entrusted by Brutus with a command in Macedonia, iii. 153. Renounces the profession of arms, 172. Confiscation of his patrimony, 177. Restored to his estates through Mæcenas, 216. His description of the battle of Actium, 254. His hymn for the Ludi Seculares, 375. His political mission, iv. 449. Sketch of his career, 452. Nature of his connection with Augustus and Mæcenas, 452. His pretensions to religious sentiment, 455. Employed to recommend moderation and contentment to the restless nobles, 456. His dissatisfaction in his later years, 455. Compared with Martial, vii. 232.
- Hordeonius Flaccus, appointed consular legatus of the legions in Upper Germany, vi. 313. Deceived by Civilis, 359. Sends Mummius Lupercus against Civilis, 389. Who defeats the Romans, 390. Yields to the demands of the Batavian cohorts; his irresolution, 391. Compelled by his soldiers to yield the command of his army to Vocula, 393. Thrown into chains by his soldiers, and released by Vocula, 393. Requires his soldiers to take the oath to Vespasian, 395. Murdered by them, 398.
- Hortalus, grandson of Hortensius the orator, petitions the senate as a pauper, and is refused relief by Tiberius, v. 113, 114.
- Hortensia, daughter of Hortensius, her speech before the triumvirs, iii. 155 *note* 2.
- Hortensius, Q., his voluptuous refinements, i. 82-85. His character, 317. His death, ii. 76 *note* 2. His widow Marcia married to Cato, 194.
- Houses of the Romans, described, iv. 390-393. Magnificence of the dwellings of the nobility, vii. 267.

- Hyrcanus, John**, replaced in the high priesthood by Pompeius, i. 139. Supported against the family of Aristobulus by the proconsul Gabinius, 350. Connects himself with the Sadducees, or anti-national party, iii. 298. Supported by Pompeius, 299. Summons Herod before the Sanhedrim, 302. Murdered by Herod, 307.
- IBERI**, submission of the, to Trajan, vii. 309.
- Iberia**, *See* Spain. Origin of the name, i. 454 *note*.
- Iceni**, a British tribe, their dwelling-place, vi. 18. Their jealousy of the Trinobantes, 19. Their cowardly submission to Plautius, 28. Defeated by Ostorius Scapula, 29. Their discontent and insurrection under Boadicea, 43, 44. Defeated, and their revolt finally suppressed, 48, 50.
- Ignatius**, his martyrdom at Antioch, vii. 293. Uncertainty as to its date, 294. His epistles, 294 *note* 1.
- Iguvium** taken by Caesar, ii. 100.
- Ἰκλιον ἀρπυγίον**, the, of Ptolemy, i. 879 *note* 1.
- Ilerda**, a fortress and magazine of the Pompeians in Spain, ii. 154. Defended by Afranius against Caesar, 138.
- Ilium**, Agrippa's harsh treatment of the people of, iv. 164. Nero pleads for it, v. 452.
- Illyricum**, Roman province of, its extent, i. 33. Visit of Caesar to, 84. State of, in the time of Caesar, iv. 120. Its dimensions enlarged by Augustus, 120. Revolt of the Illyrians, and its causes, 246.
- Imperium**, the, its original import, iii. 344. The consul imperator only in the field, 345. The ensigns of command laid aside on entering the city, except in case of a triumph, 345, 346. The proconsular imperium, its privileges and growth, 346, 347. "Imperator," as a praenomen, assumed by Caesar, 348. The proconsular imperium of the second triumvirate, 349. Process by which the sovereign rights of the Roman people were gradually taken from them and transferred through the senate to the emperor himself, v. 98-117. Supremacy of the emperor in election, legislation, and jurisdiction, 112. Control of the emperor over the senate through the powers of the censorship, 113. And through the law of majestas, 114. His authority in matters of national usage, 441. Characteristics of the imperial tyranny, vi. 174. Its acts generally shrouded in comparative privacy, 175. Historical importance of the prince's personal character, vii. 242.
- India**, envoys from, sent to Augustus in Spain, iv. 66. And from the kings Pandion and Porus, 118.
- Indus, Julius**, a Gaul, sides with the Romans, v. 168.
- Indutiomarus**, chieftain of the Treviri, submits to Caesar, i. 885. Retreats from before the camp of Labienus, 396. His death, 398.
- Infanticide**, and exposure of children, practice of, among the Romans, iv. 400; v. 166 *note* 2.
- Inguioimerus**, a German, his defection, v. 32. Engaged with Arminius against the Romans, 41.
- Insulres**, the, subjugated by the Romans, i. 191.
- Interreges**, duties of the, i. 430.
- Inundations at Rome**, iv. 408.
- Isea Damnicorum (Exeter)** vi. 27 *note* 1.
- Isea Silurum**, vi. 49 *note* 1.
- Iseis**, worship of, at Rome confounded with Judaism, and prohibited by Tiberius, v. 150; vi. 202. Temple of, at Rome, restored by Domitian, vii. 115. Worship of, naturalized at Rome, 121.
- Italians**, nephew of Arminius, given as king to the Cherusci, v. 13. His discussions with his people, 14.
- Italy**, aristocratic nature of the senates of the towns of, i. 26. Their claims to the Latin franchise and resistance of the Romans, 27. The Social War, 27. Triumph of the Romans, but eventual concession of the Italian claims, 28. Organical reaction under Sulla, and ascendancy of the exclusive or Roman policy, 31, 32. Acquiescence of the Italians in Sulla's settlement, 32. The boundaries of Italy, 32. The Italians conciliated by their comprehension in the Roman state, 49. They lend no countenance to the movements of Lepidus and Brutus, 49. Alarm of the Romans at the diminution of the free population of Italy, 56. Immigrations of the Gauls into Italy, 138, 139. Horrors of the triumphal proscriptions throughout Italy, iii. 156. Lands confiscated by Octavius to satisfy the legions, 177. Tranquillity finally restored, 184. The boundary of Italy at *Ad Finem*, iv. 88. State of the peninsula at the beginning of the reign of Augustus, 121. Who pronounces the Var the boundary of Italy and Gaul, 122. The eleven regions or circles, 122. Statement of Polybius regarding the population of Italy, 383. Inferences from climate and physical features, 385. Basis for an approximate calculation of the population, 386. The population of Italy compared with that of the provinces, 340. Greek cities in Italy, 362. The police of Italy, v. 142. The government of Italy under Tiberius, 148. Expulsion of the soothsayers, 149. The cities of Italy plundered by the Vitellians, vi. 339. Decrease in the population of Italy in the reign of Vespasian, vii. 26. And decline of wealth in the reign of Domitian, 114. Trajan's measures for the special benefit of Italy, 211.
- Itinerary system of the Romans in Gaul**, iv. 80. That of Antoninus, vii. 492. And of Jerusalem, 492.
- Itius, Portus**, Caesar's force for the subjugation of Britain assembled at, i. 385.
- JAMES**, first bishop of Jerusalem, his martyrdom, vii. 294 *note*.
- Janiculum**, the white signal flag on the, i. 108. Struck by Metellus, 108. The Janiculan quarter described, iv. 384.
- Janus**, temple of, iii. 330. Shut by Octavia, 321. And by Vespasian, vii. 16.

Japydes, the, defeated by Octavius, iii. 238. Javolenus, celebrated juriscult, vii. 405. Jerusalem, the temple-citadel of, taken by Pompeius, i. 189. John Hyrcanus replaced in the high-priesthood, 139. The Holy of Holies profaned by Pompeius, 189. Spoliation of the Temple by Crassus, 189 *note* 2, 415 *note* 1. Splendour of the city in the reign of Tiberius, v. 279. And magnificence of its sovereigns, 280. The emperor Calus's statue ordered to be set up in the Holy of Holies, 316. Solemn entry of Herod Agrippa into Jerusalem, 380. The two contending factions, 380, 381. Tumults in Jerusalem under the first Roman procurators controlled by the prudence of the Sanhedrim, vi. 421. Herod Agrippa, the tetrarch, employed as a spy upon the Jews, 424. The Zealots, or party of independence, 425, 428. Their Sicarii, or secret assassins, 425. A Roman detachment in the city compelled to capitulate, and massacred, 426. Defeat of Cestius Gallus before the city, 427. Origin of the Jews and Jerusalem, according to Tacitus, 441. Religious sentiment among the Jews at this period, 445. Revolutionary proceedings of the Zealots in Jerusalem, 447. They massacre the moderate party and assume the government, 448. In three factions, occupy the city, 449. Topography of Jerusalem, 450. Titus conducts an army against the city, 454. Operations of the siege, 455, *et seq.* Forcing of the outer wall, 456. The population overawed by the resolution of the Zealots to defend the city to the last, 456. Lines of circumvallation drawn by Titus round the city, 457. Distress of the citizens, 458, 467. Famine and portents, 458. The Christians retire from the city, 460. The fortress Antonia taken, 460. Destruction of the Temple, 463, 464. The Upper City defended by the Zealots, 466. Dissolution of order and discipline among the besieged, 467. Destruction of the Upper City, 468. Conclusion of the war, 471. The Jewish trophies on the arch of Titus, 472. Foundation of the colony of *Ælia Capitolina* and desecration of the holy places, vii. 308, 309.

Jews, those of Rome favoured by Cæsar, ii. 338; iii. 284; vi. 204. Their sorrow and resentment at his murder, iii. 41, 284. The Jews of Alexandria, 281, 284. Their character in foreign lands, iii. 288. Their dispersion and settlement in the Roman empire, in Greece, in Babylon and *Æthiopia*, 283-285. Their synagogue in Rome, 284. Form a third part of the population of Alexandria, 286. Their proselytizing activity, 286. Form a national confederacy throughout the three continents, 287. The narrowness of their limits the main cause of their dispersion, 288. Greek and Jewish emigration compared, 288. Attempts of Antiochus Epiphanes to Hellenize them, 290. Recovery of their independence under the Maccabees, 292. Their first treaty with Rome, 292. Influence of Greek civilization on Jewish ideas, 292, 295. First antagonism of the

Pharisees and Sadducees, 295, 296. Interference of the Romans in Jewish affairs, 299. Pompeius decides between the claims of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, 299. Resistance of Jews to the Romans, and commencement of the struggle between them, 300. Scaurus, Gabinius, Crassus, and Cæsar, in Palestine, 300. Ascendancy of the Herods, the family of Antipater the Idumean, 301. The national spirit roused against them, 302. Herod the Great receives the kingdom of Judea from Antonius, 305. Favours granted by Agrippa to the Jews, iv. 164. The Jews in Rome patronized by the first Cæsars, vi. 204. Their turbulence at Rome, 206. Proscribed and banished by Tiberius, v. 150; vi. 207. Confounded with the worshippers of Isis, v. 150; vi. 207. At feud with the Egyptians, v. 310. Divided abroad and at home with factions, vi. 208. Spiritual pride of the Jewish freedmen in Rome, 209. Their reception of Christianity, 210. Special applicability of St. Paul's teaching to the Roman Jews and proselytes, 210. The claim of Caius to divine worship resented with indignation by the Jews, v. 315. Mission of Philo the Jew to the emperor, 316. The emperor's statue ordered to be set up in the temple of Jerusalem, 316. Caius's interview with the Alexandrian and Jewish envoys in the gardens of Mæcenas, 317. Tone of intercourse among the Jews, vi. 417. The great rising of the Jews against the Romans, 418, *et seq.* Attitude of the Jews in the West and in the East, 418. Sources of the history of the Jews misappreciated by Tacitus, 439. His strange misrepresentation of them and of their religion, 441. Vigour of religious sentiment among the Jews at the time of Josephus, 445. The Jews, in the view of Christians, judicially abandoned to their selfish passions, 446. Their importance at Rome, vii. 122, 123. Their dispersion in the East, 284. Their numbers in Mesopotamia, and their turbulence in Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrene, 284. Severe measures taken against them in Egypt, 284. Closing of the temple at Heliopolis, 285. Sedition of Jonathan at Cyrene, 286. Contempt into which the Jews at Rome had fallen at this time, 286. General revolt of the Jews throughout the East in the reign of Trajan, 308. Atrocities perpetrated by the insurgents, 309, 310. Insurrection of the Jews in Palestine, 314. Preservation of the Jewish nationality by the teaching of the Jewish doctors at Tiberias, 314. Typical character of the Rabbi Akiba, 315. Barcochebas appointed Jewish leader in Palestine, 316. Final defeat and dispersion of the Jews under Barcochebas, 318. Final separation of the Christians from the Jews, 319.

John of Giscala, a chief of the Zealots in Jerusalem, vi. 429. His character as drawn by Josephus, 433. His command in the city during the great siege, 449. Takes refuge under ground, 467. His life spared, 470.

- Jonathan of Cyrene, his sedition, vii. 286.
Put to death, 286 *note*².
- Jotapata, story of the siege and capture of, vi. 483.
- Joppa, taken and destroyed by the Romans, vi. 436.
- Josephus, the historian, his account of the emperor Tiberius, v. 255, 256. Account of, vi. 480. In command in Galilee, 480. Number of troops under his command, 492. Harassed by the Zealots, 493. Defeats Jotapata, and is captured by the Romans, 493. Favoured by Vespasian, 495. Adopts the name of Titus Flavius, 495. Employed by Titus to offer terms to the Jews, 497, 461. Charged by his countrymen with being a renegade, 491.
- Juba, king of Numidia, insulted by Caesar at Rome, i. 145. His hostility to Caesar, ii. 164. Attacks and defeats Curio, 165, 167. His cruelty to his Roman prisoners, 168. His audacious presumption, 168. Joined by Scipio and Varus, 283. His army, 286. At Utica with Cato, 286. Urges the destruction of Utica, 287. Attacked by Bocchus, 289. Defeats Caesar, 291. Defends his capital, Ciria, 292. His insolence in the senatorian camp, 293. His death, 301, 302.
- Juba, the younger, spared by Caesar, ii. 310. Appointed king of Mauretania by Augustus, and marries Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Antonius, iv. 91; v. 142. His account of the expedition of Caius Caesar to the East, iv. 214. His son, Ptolemaeus put to death by Caius, v. 368.
- Judaism, arrival of the time for appreciating the idea of the Divine Unity, the essential dogma of, vi. 203. Freedom of Judaism offensive to Domitian, vii. 122. The Jewish tribute, 123. Proscription of Roman nobles on a charge of Judaism, 124. Overthrow of the Jewish, and succession of the Christian dispensation, 291. Establishment of the Jewish schools at Tiberias, 292. The Law, the Mishna, and the Gemara, 283. Interest taken by Domitian in the dogmatic teaching of Judaism, 373.
- Judea, its relations to Rome, iii. 282. Ably governed by Herod the Great, 309. Visited by Agrippa, iv. 162. Given to his son Archelaus, v. 269. Insurrection in, 269. Crushed by Varus, 270. The kingdom annexed to the Roman empire, 270; vi. 268, 420. Government of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, v. 270, 271. Condition of Judea under Roman dominion, 272. Given to Herod Agrippa, 380. Reverts to Rome, 381. Titus charged with the conduct of affairs in Judea, vi. 351. Judea in the maturity of its powers, 415. Its material prosperity, and antique simplicity of manners, 417. Resistance of the brigands or false Christa, 420. Insurrection in Galilee, put down by Quadratus, prefect of Syria, 423. Comparative tranquillity of Judea during the government of Felix, 423. Tumults in Jerusalem, 421. *cf. sup.* Vespasian appointed to conduct operations in Judea, 428. The two contending factions, Zealots and Herodians, and their leaders, 428, 425, 428, 429. Vespasian's first operations detached against *Galilee*, 429. Military resources of Judea, 432. Josephus in command in Galilee, 430. Siege and capture of Jotapata, 433. Of Joppa, 435. Of Tiberias and Tarichea, 437. Reduction of Perea, 437. Suspension of hostilities during the struggle for the succession, 438. Destruction of Jerusalem and conclusion of the war in Judea, 454-479.
- Judex, enactment of a pecuniary qualification for the office of, i. 445. The judges under the *capitula*, 75, 491.
- Judgment, silent, the mode of procedure so called, i. 561.
- Judicia, the, restored to the senate by Sulla, i. 32. Its shameless partiality and usurpation, 58. Pompeius unites with Crassus and Cicero in transferring a share of the *judicia* from the nobles to the knights, 51. Distribution of the *judicia* among the senate, the knights, and the *ararian* tribunes, 100.
- Julia, aunt of Caesar, and widow of Marius, her funeral oration pronounced by Caesar, i. 101.
- Julia, the younger of Caesar's sisters, married to Balbus, ii. 267 *note*¹. Her funeral oration pronounced by Augustus, 367 *note*¹.
- Julia, daughter of Caesar, married to Pompeius, i. 175. Cause of her last illness, 344. Her death, 362. Her obsequies in the field of Mars, 364. Effect of her death on the alliance of Pompeius and Caesar, 405.
- Julia, daughter of Augustus and Scribonia, date of her birth, iv. 125, *note*¹. Married (1) to Marcellus, 127; (2) to Agrippa, 135; (3) to Tiberius, 179, 208. Her children by Agrippa, 136. Accompanies her husband to the East, 162. Retained to Tiberius, 170. Married to him, 173, 182. Affection of Augustus for her, 208. Her beauty, accomplishments, and levities, 209-204. Her disorderly life, disgrace, and banishment, 165, 173, 210-212. Specially exempted from all benefits in her father's will, v. 18. Her death at Klagenfurt, 29.
- Julia, granddaughter of Augustus, daughter of Agrippa and Julia, married to L. Emilius Paulus, iv. 256. Banished by her grandfather, 257. Specially exempted from sharing his property, v. 18. Her death in the island of Trimerus, 210.
- Julia, daughter of Titus, vii. 64.
- Julia, daughter of Germanicus, married to Vinicius, v. 249. Recalled from banishment by Claudius, but again banished, 407. Her death, 407.
- Julia, daughter of Drusus and Livilla, married (1) to Nero Germanicus; (2) to Rubellus Plautus, v. 250.
- Julian basilica at Rome, inaugurated by Octavianus, iii. 314.
- Julian haven, the, constructed by Agrippa, iii. 196. Nero's proposed canal from it to Rome, vi. 141.
- Julianus, his successes over the Dacians, vii. 89.
- Julii, family of the, i. 91 *note*.

- Julius, Julius, the name, in Roman history, i. 91.
- Julius, the month, the name of Quintilis changed to, iii. 65, 73, 374.
- Julius Alpinus, the Helvetian chief, put to death by Cæcina, vi. 323.
- Junia Claudilla, married to Caius Cæsar, v. 236, 252. Her death, 252.
- Junia Silana, wife of C. Silius. Her feud with Agrippina, vi. 79. Her banishment, 81.
- Junia Tertia, or Tertulla, her mother, iii. 72. Ribald story of her, 72. Her illustrious obsequies, v. 173.
- Junius, the name of the month, changed to Germanicus, vi. 159.
- Junius Blæsus. *See* Blæsus.
- Junius Novatus, partisan of Agrippa Postumus, his attack on Augustus, v. 122.
- Junius Priscus, his wealth and execution, v. 342.
- Junius Rusticus, prefect of Rome, vii. 459. Supposed to have passed sentence on Justin, 459.
- Jupiter Capitolinus struck by lightning, i. 330. Temple of, iv. 376. That of Jupiter Feretrius, 377.
- Juriconsulta, celebrated, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, vii. 403.
- Jus Gentium and Jus Civile, anomalous relations of the, in the Flavian era, vii. 425. Gaius's statement of the distinction between them, 425.
- Jus Honorarium, character of the, vii. 426.
- Justin the Martyr, his apologies for the Christians, vii. 369 *note* 2. His judge, Junius Rusticus, 459.
- Jus trium liberorum, the, ii. 330.
- Juvavium, foundation of a colony by Hadrian at, vii. 343.
- Juvenal, the "Council of the Turbot" described by, vii. 140. His satires compared with those of Persius, 229. His manliness, 273. Compared with Tacitus, 274. Difference in the tone of his earlier and later writings, 276. Considered as a champion of Roman ideas, 278.
- Juvenalia, the festival of the, instituted by Nero, vi. 107, 108.
- Juventius Celsus conspires against Domitian, but pardoned on condition of turning delator, vii. 147.
- KIDNAPPING**, prevalence of, in Italy, ii. 362.
- Knights, their moral superiority to the senators, i. 54. A reform in favour of the equestrian order undertaken by Pompeius, 70. Who unites with Crassus and Cicero, in transferring a share in the judiciary to them, 72. Mortified and irritated by Cato, 125. Occupation and distinction of the knights, iii. 397. The lists of the knights revised by Claudius, v. 385. And their privileges extended by him, 457.
- LABEO, Q. ANTISTITIUS**, commits suicide at Philippi, iii. 170.
- Laberius, Decimus, compelled by Cæsar to appear on the stage, ii. 358.
- Labienus, Q., son of Titus, enters the Parthian service, his successes in Asia, arrogance, and death, iii. 191, 192.
- Labienus, T., the ablest of Cæsar's officers in Gaul, i. 246, 264. Left in command in Gaul, 262. At the battle with the Nervii, 277, 279. Stationed in the country of the Treviri, 291. Chastises the Morini, 383. Attacked by and repulses the Gauls, 397. Defeats the Treviri, 399. Checks the Menapii, 401. His success in the Ædnan war, ii. 26, 36. Puts down a revolt of the Treviri, 36. His perfidy to Commius, 38. Cæsar's legatus in the Cisalpine, 77. His defection from Cæsar, 99. Checks desertion in the Pompeian army, 193. His cruelty to Cæsarian prisoners, 221. His attempt on Cyrene, 283. Defeats Cæsar, 292. Escapes from Thapsus, 305. Falls at Munda, 317.
- Labienus, T., his freedom as a writer of history, iv. 436. His writings suppressed by the senate, but restored to circulation by Caius, v. 239.
- Laco, Cornelius, an adherent of Galba, vi. 294.
- Lamia, Ælius, detained by Tiberius from his government of Syria, vi. 262.
- Lamia, Ælius, deprived of his wife and slain by Domitian, vii. 150.
- Lands assigned by Cæsar to his veterans, ii. 323. Roman mode of measuring land, iv. 39, 40.
- Land-tax, the Roman proprietors of public domains released from payment of, i. 56. Quiritary proprietorship, embracing exemption from the land-tax, reluctantly given by the emperors, vii. 418.
- Language, varieties of, spoken in the Roman empire, iv. 301.
- Lanuvium, birth-place and residence of Antoninus Pius, vii. 395 *note*.
- Laodicea, state of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 360.
- Lares, popular worship of the, restored by Augustus, iv. 25. The worship combined with that of Augustus himself, 26.
- Laterensis, L. Juventius, second in command in Further Spain, ii. 267. Put to death by Cassius, 267.
- Laterensis, M. Juventius, lieutenant of Plancus, commits suicide, iii. 126.
- Latin, the official language of the whole Roman empire, iv. 298. Prevalence of the Latin language in the western provinces, 300. Comprehensiveness, strength, &c., of the Latin language, vii. 246.
- Latin franchise, the, i. 23. Claims of the Italian allies to the, 37. Eventual concession of the privilege to the Italian claimants, 23. Law of L. Julius Cæsar for admitting them, 91 *note* 3. The franchise communicated by Cæsar to the provincials, ii. 323. Extended by the manumission of slaves, iv. 308. Granted by Vespasian to Spain, vii. 23. Extension of the franchise in the reign of Antoninus Pius, 417. Its hardship and vexations, 418. Quiritary proprietorship, 418. Imposition of the legacy duty on personal enfranchisement, 419. Constant degradation of the character of the Roman citizenship in the provinces, 420. Gradual Extension of citizenship to all the free population of the empire, 421. Decree of Antonius Caracalla, 423.

- Latinus, the mime, his arrogance and favour with Domitian, vii. 110.
- Latobrigæ, the, join the Helvetii, i. 240.
- Laws, Cæsar's project of a complete code of, ii. 333. Legislative and judicial functions of the senate and the people, iii. 376. The prerogative of initiation assumed by Augustus, 376. His edicts, 377. The edicts and rescripts of the emperor, 377, 378. Misconception of the phrase *legibus solutus*, 379. The *lex regia*, 381. Constitutional functions of the Roman people under the empire, 386. Functions of the senate, 392. And of the knights, 397. The jurisprudence of Augustus, iv. 43. Failure of the civil laws in application to questions between foreigners, vii. 424. Anomalous relation of the *Jus Civile* and the *Jus Gentium* in the Flavian era, 425. The *Jus Honorarium* and Perpetual Edict of the prætor, 426. The provincial edict of the præfects, 426. Methods and principles of procedure in the provinces, 427. Relations of Roman and native usage, 428. Decline of public spirit coincident with the perfection of jurisprudence, 430. Uniformity without amalgamation, 431.
- Legacy duty, imposition of the, on personal enfranchisement, vii. 430.
- Legions, pay and length of service of the, under the empire, iii. 414. Complement of the legion under Augustus, 415. Stations of the legions under Tiberius, v. 142. No legion quartered in Italy, which is defended by the urban cohorts and prætorian guards, 143. The discipline of the legions strenuously maintained by Tiberius, 144. Recruited in the provinces, vi. 268. Permanence of the constitution of the legion, vii. 444. List of the legions and their stations in the reign of Aurelius, 444 *note* 2.
- Legislation, power of, in the people and senate, but subsequently in the emperor, v. 101.
- Lemonum, capital city of the Pietones, taken by Duratius and held for the Romans, ii. 86.
- Lentulus, P. Cornelius, Sura, consul, defeated by Spartacus, i. 51. Deposed from his command, 51. Joins Catiline's conspiracy, 116. Proposes a new insurrection of slaves and criminals, 117.
- Lentulus, Cn. Cornelius, appointed to the revived office of censor, i. 73.
- Lentulus Crus, L. Cornelius, elected consul, ii. 75. His chances of advantage from anarchy, 84. Covets the house of Hortensius and the gardens of Cæsar, 223. Murdered in Egypt, 246.
- Lentulus Gaetulicus, commander of the legions on the Upper Rhine, deposes Tiberius, v. 266, 348. Put to death by Caius, 350.
- Lentulus Marcellinus, elected consul, i. 381. Resists the election of his successor, 383.
- Lentulus Spinther, elected consul, i. 322. The government of Cilicia falls by lot to him, 328. Departs for his province, 328. Retreats before Cæsar, ii. 102. Aspires to the office of Pontifex Maximus, 225. His position at the battle of Pharsalia, 230. Joins the conspirators in the Capitol, iii. 12.
- Lepida, found guilty of adultery and poisoning, v. 129.
- Lepida, Domitia, mother of Messalina, present at her daughter's death, v. 465. Has charge of the youthful Nero, vi. 55. Her intrigues against Agrippina, 154. Found guilty of treason and executed, 456.
- Lepidus, M. Æmilius, great-great-grandfather of the triumvir, six times princeps, iii. 368.
- Lepidus, M. Æmilius, his attempts to revive the Marston party, i. 49, 61. His defeat and death, 49.
- Lepidus, M. Æmilius, interrex in a.c. 52, his house attacked by the Clodian mob, i. 437. Appointed governor of Borne by Cæsar, ii. 128, 176, 176, 346. Adheres to the principles of Cæsar, 180. Resolves the province of Hither Spain, 184, 280. Allowed the honour of a triumph, 280. Designated consul for a.c. 46, 281. His administration of Rome as master of the horse, 346. His character as "Cæsar's friend," 348. Accepts the government of Hither Spain and Gælia Narbonensis, 366. In Rome at the time of Cæsar's assassination, iii. 8. Supports Antonius, 19, 13, 31. His position, 15. Surrounds the senate with an armed force, 20. Accompanies Antonius to the forum, 22, 26. His speech to the people, 23. Impatient to act against the liberators, but entertains Brutus, 30. Marches to Spain, 96. Urges the senate to treat with Antonius, 112. Stationed in Transalpine Gaul, and secretly aids Antonius, 124. Antonius joins him, 126, 127. Invited by Octavius to combine with Antonius, 161. Negotiates with Octavius, 164. Conference of Octavius, Antonius, and Lepidus, and formation of the second triumvirate, 187. Designated consul for a.c. 42, 138. Narbonensis Gaul and Spain allotted to him, 145. Consents to the proscription of his brother Paulus Æmilius, 146. Enters Rome with his colleagues, 142. Appointed consul, a.c. 42, 157. His triumph and unpopularity, 157. Compelled by his colleagues to surrender the command in Italy, and Africa assigned to him, 173, 185. Refuses to join Octavius, 193. Assists Octavius in his war with Sextus Pompeius, 198, 201. Deserts to the Pompeians, and combines with them against Octavius, 202. Abandoned by his soldiers, 203. Submits to Octavius, who spares his life, 203. Deprived of his share of the triumvirate, 203. Retains the office of Pontifex Maximus, 203, 202. His death, iv. 165.
- Lepidus, son of the triumvir, conspires against Augustus, and is put to death by him, iii. 312.
- Lepidus, M. Æmilius, named by Augustus as a possible competitor for the empire, v. 10. Defends Cn. Piso, 80. His proposal for diminishing the rewards of the delators, 181. His nobility and influence, 245. Married to Drusilla, daughter of Germanicus, but resigns her to Caius, 305. Put to death by Caius, 360.
- Lesbian wines, iv. 316.

- Leuce, Come, town of, in Arabia, iv. 98, 100 *note*¹.
- Lexovii, the, compelled to submit to the Romans, i. 281. Joins a maritime confederacy against the Romans, 291. Compelled to maintain Cæsar's soldiers, 297.
- Libela, conduct of Augustus and Tiberius with respect to, v. 122. And of Nero, vi. 114.
- Libo, Drusus, his intrigues against Tiberius and suicide, v. 89.
- Libo, L. Scribonius, takes the command of the Pompeian fleet, ii. 199. Blockades Brundisium, 199. Mediates between Octavius and Sextus Pompeius, iii. 187. Clings to Sextus, but finally abandons him, 204.
- Library of Lucullus, i. 88. Of Octavia, founded by her brother Octavius, iii. 285. Of Pollio, supposed to be purchased by the fruits of his Illyrian campaign, ii. 386 *note*¹; iii. 285. The first public library in Rome established by Cæsar, ii. 385. The Alexandrian Library accidentally burnt by Cæsar, 259. Libraries of Trajan, vii. 198.
- Liburni, the, defeated by Octavius, iii. 282.
- Licinian rogations, enactment of the, i. 25.
- Licinianus, the prætorian, his banishment, vii. 105.
- Licinius Damasippus, abets Juba, king of Numidia, in his insolence, ii. 168.
- Licinus, his early life, iv. 157. His tyranny as procurator of Gaul, 157. His adroit exculpation of himself to Augustus, 158. His tomb, 158.
- Ligarius, Q., Cicero's speech for, ii. 344. Joins the conspiracy against Cæsar's life, 379.
- Ligurians, their hostility to the Massilians, i. 194. Besiege Antipolis and Nicæa, 195. Defeated by the Romans, and their territory given to the Massilians, 195. Origin of the Ligurians, 213. Their final subjugation effected by Augustus, iv. 87.
- Limyra, Calus Cæsar dies at, iv. 219.
- Lingones, a Gallic tribe, refuse to allow a passage to the fugitive Helvetii, i. 252. Two legions stationed in the country of the, 406.
- Liscus, the vergobret of the Ædui, discovers the treachery of Dumnorix to Cæsar, i. 249.
- Litavius, commander of the Ædian levies under Cæsar, revolts, ii. 21. Pardonned, 21.
- Literature of the Romans, influence of that of the Greeks on the, ii. 417. Nævus and Luellius the champions of the old Roman literature, 418. Imitative character of Roman literature, 421. General purity and terseness of style in the Augustan writers, iv. 435. Titus Livius and his history, 436. Virgil, 439. Horace, 449, 452. Propertius, 455. Tibullus, 460. Ovid, 462. Decline and suppression of literature in the reign of Tiberius, v. 261; vi. 183. No restriction on writing among the Romans, 183. This indulgence accepted in compensation for restriction in publication, 1-3. Consideration of the extent of the class of readers, 184. Prices of the books in Rome, 185. Facilities attending the composition and multiplication of books, 186. Characteristics of the popular literature of the time, 186. Fashion of historical composition, 187. Extraordinary activity of the elder Pliny, 187. Discouragement of contemporary history, 188. Vespasian's liberal endowment of literature, vii. 23. Effect of the Flavian reaction on the tone of Roman literature, 222. Comparison of Claudian and Flavian writers, 222 *et seq.* Poets of the Flavian age, 228. The historians of the same period, 233. Preference of the Romans for biography to history, 248. Collection of private correspondence, 250. Pliny's account of the true man of letters—the elder Pliny, 264.
- Livia Drusilla, wife of Tiberius Claudius, and mother of Tiberius the emperor and Drusus, carried off and married by Octavius, iii. 216; iv. 124. Her early history, manners, and character, iv. 124, 125. Jealous of Octavia, 129. Urges the marriage of Julia with Tiberius, 170. Suspected of hastening the end of Calus and Lucius Cæsar, 219. Secures the succession for Tiberius, 221. Believed to have counselled Augustus to clemency in Cinna's case, 223. Her intrigues against Agrippa Posthumus, 258. Summons Tiberius to the death-bed of Augustus, 287; v. 9. Conceals the emperor's decease until his arrival, 10. Adopted into the Julian family with the title of Augusta, 18. Perhaps instructs Planina to thwart Agrippina, 61. Believed accessory to the death of Germanicus, 72. Does not appear at his funeral, 74. Screens Planina, 86. Her secret influence over Tiberius, 92. The temple voted to her by the provincials, 186. Her death and character, 210, 211. Her friends persecuted by Tiberius, 216.
- Livia, or Livilla, sister of Germanicus and wife of Drusus, brings forth twin children, v. 73. Intrigues with Sejanus and poisons her husband, 176. Sejanus demands her in marriage, 180. Affianced to him, 219. With Tiberius at Capræa, 222. Her guilt established, she is starved to death, 231.
- Livia, sister of the emperor Calus, implicated in a conspiracy against her brother, v. 850. Banished, 861. Recalled from banishment, 863.
- Livy, character of his history, iv. 457. Called by Augustus "a Pompeian," 437. Assists the studies of Claudius, 437. Services performed by him for his countrymen, 438. Loss sustained by us through the disappearance of the latter decades, 437. His "Dialogues," 438. Frequents the rhetorical schools, 439. His history commanded by Calus to be removed from the libraries, v. 898. His works compared with those of Tacitus, vii. 238.
- Locusta, the professor of poisoning, v. 456; vi. 285.
- Lolla Paulina, the richest woman in Rome, Pliny's account of her, v. 307. Wife of P. Memmius Regulus, 307. Espoused and

- shortly afterwards repudiated by Caius Caesar, 307. Banished by Claudius with the loss of her fortune, 443.
- Lollius, M.**, elected to the consulship, iii. 368. Defeated in Gaul, iv. 156. Accompanies Caius Caesar into the East, 214. Denounced by Caius Caesar, 217. His death, 217. Father of Lollia Paulina, v. 396.
- Lollius Urbicus**, defeats the Brigantes, and builds the wall of Antoninus in North Britain, vii. 490.
- Londinium** in the time of Claudius, vi. 17. Sacked by the Iceni, 47. In the time of Hadrian, vii. 846.
- Lorium**, residence of Antoninus Pius at, vii. 408.
- Lucanus, M., Annæus**, takes part in Piso's conspiracy against Nero, vi. 146. Said to have betrayed his mother, 149. Put to death, 149. His early compliments to Nero, 152, 236. Examination of his "Pharsalia" as a history of mind and opinion of the period, 235-244. Characteristics of Lucan and of his contemporaries, 239. His deficiency in imagination, 241. His affectation of encyclopædic knowledge, 242. His birthplace and parentage, 243 *note* 1. His "Pharsalia," 243; vii. 223. Compared with Silius Italicus, vii. 223, 224. And with Tacitus, 235-243.
- Lucea**, levees of Caesar at, in 697, I. 592.
- Lucilius, L.**, the historian, sues for the consulship, I. 168.
- Lucilius, G.**, a champion of the old Roman literature, ii. 419.
- Lucilla**, daughter of the emperor M. Aurelius, betrothed to Verus, vii. 453.
- Lucretius**, effect of his poem "On the Nature of Things," ii. 353.
- Lucretius, Q.**, nominated by Augustus to the consulship, iv. 133.
- Lucullus, Andreas**, heads a revolt of the Jews in the Cyrenaica, vii. 319.
- Lucullus, L. Licinius**, proconsul in Asia, I. 44. His attempts to reform the provincial administration, 44. Superseded in his command, 45. His views compared with those of his successor Pompeius, 45. His character, 65. His wealth, and the use he made of it, 83, 84. Receives the honour of a triumph, 149. Intrigue of Memmius with the wife of Lucullus's brother, 161. Lucullus's life in danger, 173. His advice to Cicero, 185.
- Lucullus, Marcus**, his invasion of Mæsia, iv. 90.
- Lucullus**, formerly prefect of Britain, put to death, vii. 147.
- Ludi Apollinares** exhibited in Rome by Brutus, iii. 73.
- Ludi Sæculares** of Augustus, iii. 375; iv. 142-145. Of Claudius, v. 421.
- Ludi Maximi** of Nero, vi. 111.
- Lugdunensis**, the provincia, organization of, by Augustus, iv. 75.
- Lugdunum**, founded by Plancus, iv. 75. Its site, great roads from it to the Atlantic and British Channel, its wealth, population, and importance as a colony, 76. The commercial centre of the Gauls, 76. The imperial residence of Lugdunum, 76. Its mint, 76. Its rhetorical schools, 92. Altar dedicated to Augustus and Rome by the Gauls at Lugdunum, iv. 175. Imperial auction of Calcas at Lugdunum, v. 349.
- Lupercalia**, revived by Augustus, iii. 375.
- Lupercus**. *See* Memmius.
- Lupus**, one of the assassins of Caius, put to death, v. 369.
- Lupus**, prefect of Egypt, his severe measures against the Jews in his province, vii. 285. Worst of several encounters with them, 311.
- Lusitania**, Caesar's conquest of the districts of, north of the Tagus, I. 156.
- Lusius Quietus**, a Moorish captain of mercenaries, entrusted by Trajan with a command in the East, vii. 394. Quells a revolt of the Jews in Mesopotamia, 399. Urged by his soldiers to dispute the empire with Hadrian, 428. Sent by Hadrian to Macretania, 331. His intrigues and death, 336.
- Lutorius Priscus**, denounced by Haterius for his verses on the supposed death of Priscus, and executed by the senate, v. 126.
- Lyca**, autonomous states of, iv. 198. Compensated by Augustus, 198. Deprived of its autonomy, vii. 23.
- Lydia**, destruction of twelve cities of, by an earthquake, v. 146.
- MACEDONIA**, Roman province of, extent of, I. 33. The government of, created, 35. Assigned by Claudius to Piso, 395. Seized by Brutus, iii. 138.
- Maser**, Clodius, commander in Africa, claims the empire, vi. 282. His death, 295.
- Mauro**, Sertorius, appointed captain of the Prætorian guards, and entrusted by Plautius with the arrest of Silius, v. 223. Distinctions heaped upon Mauro by the citizens, 225. Becomes almost as obnoxious as Silius, 248. Put to death by order of Silius, 302.
- Maccenas, C. Cilnius**, applied to by Pollio on Virgil's behalf, iii. 177. Draws up the treaty of Brundisium, 183. Renews negotiations between Augustus and Antonius, 195. His origin and career, 214-216. His freedom as counsellor to Augustus, iv. 149. His easy temper, 149. The representative of progress, 151. The first minister of the empire, 152. His political influence as patron of literature, 159. His domestic troubles, 154. Prescription of Antonius Musa for his sleeplessness, 164. His death, 194. His manners and character, 194. Causes of his reputation with posterity, 195.
- Mæsia**, first invaded by M. Lucullus, iv. 90. Annexed by Thracius to Illyria, 91. Revolt in, extinguished by L. Piso, 163. Condition of, at the end of the reign of Tiberius, v. 267. Seized by Trajan, vii. 190. Hadrian's campaign in, vii. 335.
- Mainz**, Trajan's bridge at, vii. 105.
- Maiv**, the name of the month, changed to Claudius, vi. 159.
- Majestas**, the law of, its origin, v. 115. Distinction between *majestas* and *perduellio*, 115. The law of *Majestas* composed

- of the *Lex Apuleia*, *Lex Varia*, *Lex Cornelia*, and *Lex Julia de Majestate*, 115-118. Definition of it by the Julian law, 118. Few trials for majestas under Augustus, 119. Its application extended by Tiberius to pasquinades and abusive words, 120, 121. Constructive majestas, 125. Cases of Falanius and Rubrius, 125. Cases of Granius Marcellus, Ennius, and others, 125-129. Extravagances of the law, 137. Nero's temperate proceedings in cases of majesty, vi. 114.
- Mallius, C., an adherent of Catilina, i. 181. Raises the standard of revolt in Etruria, 181. Declared an enemy of the state, 181.
- Mamurra, chief of Cæsar's engineering department, his skill and wealth, ii. 155. His house on the Cælian hill, iv. 878.
- Mancipi, and *necmancipi*, in the old Roman law of property, ii. 418.
- Manilius, the author of the Manilian law, conferring absolute power in the East upon Pompeius, i. 75.
- Manilius, his poem on astronomy and astrology, not mentioned by any ancient writer, v. 262. Period in which he flourished, 268 *note*.
- Manlius, his conquests in Gaul, i. 197. Defeated by the Cimbri, 208.
- Mantua, confiscation of, by Octavius, to satisfy the legionaries, iii. 177.
- Marble, trade in, among the ancients, iv. 318.
- Marcella, sister of Octavius, married to M. Agrippa, iii. 381; iv. 127. Divorced by him, 135. Married to Julius Antonius, iii. 271 *note*¹; iv. 136, 138 *note*.
- Marcellus, M. Claudius, elected consul, ii. 51. His hostility to Cæsar, 51. His decree about the assignment of provinces aimed at Cæsar, 60. Whom he insults by ill treatment of a Transpadane Gaul, 61. Retires to Mytilene, 843. Endeavors to obtain his recall to Rome, 844. Cicero's oration "pro Marcello," 844. He is recalled, but assassinated at Athens, 844.
- Marcellus, first husband of Octavia, iii. 188.
- Marcellus, M., son of Octavia, betrothed to the daughter of Sextus Pompeius, iii. 188, 217. Marries Julia, daughter of Augustus, iv. 126. Designated *adile*, and released from the "*Lex Annalis*," iii. 838; iv. 128. More popular than Agrippa, 128. His illness and death at Balæ, 181, 182. His obsequies, 182. First tenant of the Mausoleum Augusti, 188. His death imputed to Livina, 193. The "*Theatrum Marcelli*," 189. His funeral oration pronounced by Augustus, 188. Virgil's verses his imperishable monument, 138.
- Marcellus, Granius, accused of constructive treason, v. 125.
- Marcellus, C. Claudius, elected consul, ii. 58, 75. Appeals to Cæsar's generosity on behalf of his brother, 344.
- Marcellus Epirus, a noted delator, vi. 168. His declamation against Pætus Thrasen, 171. His rewards, 172.
- Marcia, widow of Hortensius, married to Cato, ii. 194.
- Marcia Furnilla, wife of Titus, vii. 46.
- Marciana, Trajan's sister, her magnanimity, vii. 179.
- Marcus Rex, his conquests in Gaul, i. 197.
- Marcomanni, the, transplant themselves from the sources of the Danube into Bohemia, iv. 287, 242. Formation of the kingdom of Maroboduus, 242, 243. Campaign of Tiberius against them, 245. Their war with the Cherusci, v. 53. Wars of M. Aurelius with them, vii. 464, 474.
- Mariamne, the Asmonian princess, married to Herod the Great, iii. 304. His love and jealousy of her, 308. Put to death by him, 308.
- Mariamne, daughter of Herod Agrippa, vi. 419.
- Marian, or popular party, at Rome, their claims the weak point in the body politic, i. 87. The Marian party represented by Cæsar, 90. Who obtains the rehabilitation of several of them, 101. The trophies of Marius restored by Cæsar, 104. Weapons of the Marian party in Cæsar's hands, 106, 108.
- Marillinus, grandfather of Hadrian, first senator of the Hadrian branch of the Ælian family, vii. 323.
- Marius, his proscriptions and massacres, i. 81. His death, 81. His bust boldly exhibited by Cæsar, 101. His trophies restored by Cæsar, 105. His victory at Aquæ Sextiæ, 204. And at Vercellæ, 206.
- Maria, the younger, his offer to the Samnites, i. 81.
- Marius Priscus condemned to banishment for malversation in Africa, vii. 434.
- Maroboduus, or Marbod, formation of his kingdom in southern Germany, iv. 243. His army, 243. Compared to Pyrrhus and Antiochus, 244. Campaign of Tiberius against him, 245. Occupies the land of the Boii, founds a kingdom there, and trains his army after the Roman model, 243, 244; v. 53. Accepts terms of peace from Tiberius, iv. 245. Refuses to join the Cherusicans, 275. His dominions invaded by the Cherusci, who defeat him, v. 53, 54. Driven by Catualda across the Danube, 54. Granted shelter within the Roman dominions, 54. Dies at Ravenna, 55.
- Marriage amongst the Romans, ii. 273, 409. Remarks on the principle of Roman marriage, iv. 80. Marriage fallen into disfavour and desuetude, 82. Influence of the freedwomen, 83. Servitude of married women, 84. Struggles of the women against it, 85. The Oppian and Voconian laws, 86. Legislation of the republic for enforcing marriage, 86. Penalties of celibacy and rewards of marriage, 89.
- Mars the Avenger, temple to, vowed by Augustus, iv. 24, 116.
- Mars, a German tribe, severely handled by Germanicus, v. 80.
- Martial, patronized by Domitian, vii. 186. His works examined and compared with those of Horace, 232.
- Martina, the poisoner, a creature of Plautina, v. 69, 79. Her death, 79.
- Martius Turbo, governor of Palestine, vii. 314, 332. Relieves Lupus in Alexandria, 311. His amazement at the fanaticism

- of the Jews, 314. Appointed by Hadrian governor of Palestine, 331. And in command in Dacia, 336.
- Marullus, C. Epidius, tribune, tears down the crown from Caesar's statue, ii. 370. His recall from banishment demanded by Caesar, iii. 18.
- Massa Babius, a delator, vii. 130.
- Maslintha, a Numidian prince, protected by Caesar, i. 144.
- Massilia, foundation of the city of, i. 193. Its position and resources, 194. Frequent attacks of the Ligurians, 194. The territory of the Ligurians given to the Massilians, 195. Attached to the cause of the Roman aristocracy, ii. 67. Declares itself in favour of the Pompeian party, 126. Defended by Domitius, 127, 129, 143. Besieged on land by Trebonius, and at sea by D. Brutus for Caesar, 130. Their fleet defeated by Brutus, 142. Description of the city at this time, 155, 156. The immense rampart of Trebonius on the land side, 156. Feigned capitulation and treachery of the besieged, 159. The siege resumed, 159. Its final submission and treatment at the hands of the Cæsarians, 179; iv. 73. Withdrawal of its dependents Antipolis and Agathe, 74. Its literary eminence, 82.
- Masora, the, described, vii. 315.
- Materius, Curiatius, poet, his tragedies, vii. 30, 31. Put to death for declaiming against tyrants, 147.
- Mathematicians, astrologers, and Chaldeans, edicts against, vii. 111.
- Mattidia, her daughter Sabina married to Hadrian, vii. 326. Bears Trajan's remains to Rome, 337.
- Matius, Caesar's friend, contributes towards the expense of the shows in honour of Caesar, iii. 63.
- Mattium, the stronghold of the Chatti, destroyed by Germanicus, v. 31.
- Mauretania, the stronghold of the king of, attacked by Cn. Pompeius ii. 288. Constituted a Roman province by Octavius, iii. 235. The kingdom given by Augustus to Juba, iv. 91; v. 142. Disturbances in, in the reign of Hadrian, vii. 334. Honoured with a visit of the emperor Hadrian, 351.
- Mauricius, his jest at Veiento, the delator, vii. 166.
- Mausoleum, or Moles Hadriani, described, vii. 383, 405.
- Media Atropatene invaded by Antonius, who is compelled to retreat, iii. 222.
- Meleartia, or Hercules, temple of, at Tyre, plundered by Caesar, ii. 276.
- Mediterranean Sea, the centre of the Roman empire, iv. 311. The navigation of the ancients on this sea, 312. Rome the emporium of its commerce, 313. Staples of commerce, 314. Spices, &c., from the East, 315. Paper from Egypt, 315. Woolens and wine, 316.
- Mela, Anneus, proscribed, vi. 162. His character and death, 163.
- Melito, Bishop of Sardis, his martyrdom, vii. 490.
- Memmius, C., his intrigue with Lucullus's brother's wife, i. 161. A candidate for the consulship, 360.
- Memmius, P. Regulus, consul, arrests Sejanus, v. 223. Compelled by Calpis to divorce his wife, Leidia Pannia, 367.
- Memmius Regulus, the prince of delators, vii. 130.
- Mennon, the vocal, vii. 377 *note* 2. Visited by the empress Sabina, 377.
- Memphi a tribe of the Belgæ, i. 226. Join the confederation against the Romans, 267. Join the Veneti in a maritime confederation, 269. Attempts of Caesar to reduce them, 297. Compelled by the Germans to cross the Rhine, 366. Sabinus and Cotta sent by Caesar into their country, 383. Chastised by them, 384. And again by Caesar, 389. Checked by Labienus, 400.
- Menecrates, Pompeian admiral, defeats Calvisius in the bay of Cumæ, iii. 134. His death, 134.
- Meneseros, the Pompeian admiral, urges Sextus Pompeius to seize the triremes, iii. 188. Curtus over to Augustus a fleet with three legions on board, 193. Claimed by Antonius as a slave, 194. Perhaps the Melas of Horace, 194 *note* 1. Returns to the standard of Sextus, but betrays his trust a second time, 199.
- Mesopotamia, successes of Crassus in, 414. Great numbers of Jews in, 392. Annexed to the empire by Trajan, vii. 308. Insurrection of the Jews in Mesopotamia, 399, 310. Quelled by Lucius Quietus, 310. Relinquished by Hadrian, 313, 331. Ceded to Rome, 459.
- Messala Niger, M. Valerius, elected consul, i. 148. Takes an active part in the prosecution of Clodius, 148.
- Messala, M. Valerius, a candidate for the consulship, i. 360. Elected consul, 363. Submits to Antonius, iii. 172. Commands an army for Octavius, 290. Abandons the senatorian cause, forsakes Antonius for Octavius, commands in the war against Sextus Pompeius, and defeats the Salsæ, 214, 234. Messala the first Augustan prefect of the city, 406; iv. 145. Deputed by the senate to offer the title of "Pater Patriæ" to Augustus, 56. Earns a triumph over Gaul on the banks of the Adour, 70. Resigns his prefecture of Rome, 145. Patron of Tibullus and literary men, 460.
- Messala, Valerius, Barbatus, father of the empress Messalina, v. 400.
- Messana, naval fight in the harbour of, ii. 250. Plundered by two armies in one night, iii. 202.
- Messalina, wife of Claudius, mother of Britannicus and Octavia, her character and influence, v. 400-402. Her favourites, Narcissus and Polybius, 411. Her passion for Mnestor, a dancer, 414. Destroys Valerius Asiaticus, 416. Flattered by Vitellius, 418. Her hatred of Agrippina, 423. Her amour with Silius, 425. And marriage with him, 427. Incredulity and examination of the story, 427-429. The freedmen combine against her, 429. Her nuptial orgies, 431. Her meeting with Claudius, 433. Her death, 434-436.

- Messius, C., a Cæsarian, defended by Cicero, i. 388.
- "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, remarks on the, iv. 463.
- Metellus Celer, the prætor, sent to watch the movements of Catilina, i. 132. Prevents him from crossing the Apennines in Gaul, 132. His letter of remonstrance to Cicero, 142. Elected consul, 160. Thrown into prison by the tribune Flavius, 162. His hostility to Pompeius, 161, 162, 166. Compelled to swear obedience to Cæsar's agrarian law, 173.
- Metellus Creticus, L. Cæcilius, attempts to prevent Cæsar from robbing the treasury of Rome, ii. 125.
- Metellus Nepos, his government of Spain, i. 39. Strikes the signal flag on the Janiculum, 103. Elected a tribune, 134. Combines with Cæsar in harassing the nobles, 141. His violence, 142. Deprived of his tribuneship by the senate, 143. Flies to the camp of Pompeius, 143. Elected consul, 322.
- Metellus Creticus, Q., honoured with a triumph, i. 140.
- Metellus Pius, tribute imposed upon Spain by, i. 157.
- Miletus, city of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 360.
- Milo, Annlus, opposes Clodius with a band of gladiators, i. 322. Renewal of his contests with Clodius, 380, 389. A candidate for the consulship, 435. His encounter with Clodius on the Appian way, trial, and exile, 436-439. His answer to Cicero, 439. His quarrel with Sallustius, ii. 44. Excluded from the amnesty granted by Cæsar, 182. Joins Cælius in an insurrection against Cæsar in Italy, 202. Defeated before Capua and slain at Cosa, 202.
- Milichus, freedman of Scævina, discloses Piso's plot, vi. 148, 149. His rewards, 151.
- Mimos, Domitian's measures against the, vii. 109.
- Minerva, temple of, dedicated by Octavius, iii. 314. Restored by Domitian, vii. 118. His chosen patroness, 151.
- Minucianus, husband of Julia, aspires to the empire, v. 868.
- Minea, revenue derived from, iii. 423.
- Mischina, estimation in which the commentary of the, was held by the Jews, vii. 283.
- Misenum, harbour of, visited by the Cilician pirates, i. 47 *note*. Villas of the Romans on the heights of, iv. 363. Pilny's villa at, vii. 51.
- Misenum, treaty of, iii. 187.
- Mithras, the Tyrian Hercules sacrificed to, by the Cilician pirates, i. 43.
- Mithridates, king of Pontus, his contests with Rome, i. 34. Haughly rejection of his proposed alliance with Sertorius, 40. His cause viewed with favour by provincials in the East, 42. His character, 43. His treatment of Aquilius, 42 *note*. Defeated by Sulla, 44. Again appears in the field, 44. Defeated by Pompeius, 45, 136. Matures a new combination against Rome, 137. Destroys himself on the revolt of his son Pharnaces, 138.
- Mithridates, his claims to the throne of Parthia, i. 350.
- Mithridates, king of Pergamus, marches to the assistance of Cæsar in Egypt, ii. 262. Reduces Pelusium and routs Ptolemaeus's troops, 262. At the battle of the Nile, 263.
- Mithridates, king of Commagene, iv. 118.
- Mithridates, receives the kingdom of the Bosphorus from Claudius, v. 380.
- Moguntiacum (Mentz), the capital of Upper Germany, vi. 339. Monument to the honour of Drusus at, iv. 185. Attacked by the Germans, but saved by the 4th and 45th legions, vi. 393. Attempt of the Chatti to seize it, vii. 82. Trajan's bridge at, 177.
- Molo, the rhetorician of Rhodes, instructs Cæsar and Cicero, i. 97, *note* 1.
- Mona, rout of the Druids in, vi. 41.
- Monæces, the Parthian, taken into favour by Antonius, iii. 221.
- Monarchy manifestly indispensable to the Romans in the time of Augustus, iii. 428. The Roman conception of constitutional monarchy, iv. 7. The prospect of monarchy not discouraging to the Romans, 48.
- Montanus Curtius, charged by Nero with a dereliction of senatorial duties, vi. 171. His punishment, 172.
- Morini, a Belgic tribe, i. 226. Joins the confederation against the Romans, 276. Join also a maritime confederation, 290. Cæsar's attempts to chastise them, 297. Punished by Labienus, 383. Defeated by C. Carrinas, iv. 70.
- Mucia, wife of Pompeius, divorced by him, i. 160.
- Mucianus, Lucianus, made proconsul of Syria by Nero, vi. 296. Espouses the cause of Vespasian, 349. Advances from Berytus westward, 351. Rebukes the haste of Antonius Primus, 357. Confirms the offers of Antonius to Vitellius, 362. Enters Rome; his strong measures there, 376, 377. Puts to death the son of Vitellius, and stays the defection of the legions in Gaul, 381, 382. Sends reinforcements into Gaul, 402.
- Mull of Galloway, Agricola's view of Ireland from the, vii. 73.
- Mummus Lupercus, commander in Lower Germany, sent against Civilis, vi. 389. Driven by Civilis from the island of the Batavi into Castra Vetera, 389. Besieged in Castra Vetera, 392. Sent captive to the prophetess Velea, but slaughtered on the way to Lippe, 402.
- Munda, battle of, ii. 316, 317.
- Mundus, Decius, and Paulina, story of, vi. 202.
- Mureus, L. Statius, joins the conspirators after Cæsar's murder, iii. 12. Places himself under the orders of Cassius, 109. Commands the republican fleets, 161. Cuts off two triumphal legions, 168.
- Murena, L. Licinius, his unsuccessful attempts to reduce the Cilician pirates, i. 48. Elected consul, 133. Prosecuted un-

- successfully for bribery by Sulpicius, 139.
- Murena, Licinius, joins a conspiracy against the life of Augustus, iii. 367; iv. 194.
- Museum, the, Alexandrian, vii. 371.
- Museum, Rufus barangus the Flavians, vi. 365. Exempted from conscription by Vespasian, vii. 32.
- Mutilation of children, Domitian's law against, vii. 107.
- Mutina, D. Brutus besieged by Antonius in, iii. 101. Attempts of the consuls Hir- tius and Pansa to relieve him, 115-119. Battle between the republicans and Antonius before, 168.
- Myia, head-quarters of the Casarean fleet at, iii. 201. Defeat of the Pompeians at, 199.
- Mytilene, siege of, i. 95.
- NÆVIUS**, the champion of early Roman literature, ii. 419.
- Namnetes, the, join a maritime confederacy against Caesar, i. 290.
- Narbo Martius, Roman colony at, i. 83, 197. Devoted to the interests of the Roman aristocracy, ii. 67.
- Narbonensis, the stronghold of the Pom- peian faction, ii. 67. Augustus's organiza- tion of the provincia Narbonensis, iv. 73.
- Narcissus, freedman and secretary of Clau- dius, v. 404. His wealth proverbial, 405. Accomplishes the ruin of Appius Silarius, 408. In league with Messalina, 411. Flattered by Vitellius, 418. Turns against Messalina and procures her destruction, 429-436. Recommends Claudius to re- marry Elia Petina, 437. Decline of his power, 456. Menaces Agrippina and Pal- las, 456. His reception by the legions in Gaul, vi. 21. Probably the Narcissus of St. Paul's Epistle, xvi. 11, 211.
- Nasamonæ, a Numidian people, revolt and are suppressed by the prætor Flaccus, vii. 94.
- Nasidius, L., sent by Pompeius to relieve the Massilians, ii. 156, 157.
- Natural philosophy, acquaintance of the Romans with, vii. 237.
- Naulochus, naval victory of Agrippa off, iii. 201, 246.
- Naumachia of Augustus at Rome, iv. 8-5.
- Navigation of the ancients, and the rate of travelling by sea, iv. 312.
- Navy, the, of Augustus, iii. 416. Mutiny of Vitellius's fleet at Misenum, vi. 361.
- Neapolis, description of, in the time of Au- gustus, iv. 363.
- Nemausus, the native place of the family of Antoninus Pius, vii. 350 *note* 2. Had- rian erects a basilica at, in honour of Plotina, 350.
- Nemi, floating palace on the lake of, vii. 272.
- Nera Come, town of, in Arabia, iv. 100.
- Neratus Priscus, desired by the senate as Trajan's successor, vii. 328.
- Nero, son of Germanicus, affection of his cousin Drusus for him, v. 166. Intro- duced by Tiberius to the senate, 177. Spies set by Sejanus to watch him, 203. Tiberius complains to the senate of him, 214. Banished to the island of Pontia, 216.
- Nero, Drusus Tiberius, father of the emper- or Tiberius, sides with L. Antonius in the war of Perusia, iii. 178.
- Nero (Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus), at ten years of age appears in the "Game of Troy," v. 422. Betrothed to Octavia, daughter of Claudius and Mes- salina, 465, 472. Seneca, the philosopher, appointed his tutor, 472. Introduced to public distinctions, 477. Comes forward as the advocate of popular measures, 492. Married to Octavia, 492. Succeeded emperor, 498. Family character of his ancestors, the Domitii, vi. 32. His parentage, 33. Misfortunes of his early years, 34. Perils which surrounded him, 61. Struggle for influence over him: the senate, the tutor, the mother, 63. Presences the funeral oration over Claudius, 65. Favourable impression made by his first speech to the senate, 66. His intrigue with the freed- woman Acte, 69. His gradual progress in vice, 70. Seneca's praise of Nero's clemency, 71. Alarm and menaces of Agrippina, 72. Nero causes Britannicus to be poisoned, 75. Seneca aims at making him popular with the senate, 77. Division between Nero and his mother, 78. The charges against her declared unfounded, 81. His dissolute amusements, 82. Consecrates a temple to Claudius, and orders a statue for his father Domitius, 84. Favourable characteristics of Nero's early government, 84. Liberality of his finan- cial measures, 86. Proposes to abolish the *vestibula*, 87. Examination of what this proposal really imports, 88. Nero's policy gives satisfaction to the senate, 91. No inquiry made into the irregularities of his private life, 92. The "Quinquen- nium Neronis," 93. Nero's passion for Poppæa Sabina, 97. Marries his mother, 103. His brutal behaviour to her corpse, 104. Attempts to justify himself to the senate, 104. His triumphal entry into Rome, 106. Gratifies the populace with shows, 107. Institutes the *Juvenalia*, 108. Descends upon the stage, 108. Institutes the *Neronia*, 109. His insensibility to national feeling; causes of this, 112. His temperate proceedings in cases of majesty and libel, 114. Elevates Pallas Rufus and Tigellinus, 115. Puts Rubellius Plau- tus and Cornelius Sulla to death, 120, 121. Further development of his cruelty, 122. Repudiates Octavia and marries Poppæa, 122, 123. His prosecution of wealthy freedmen, 125. Drives his chariot in the Circus Maximus, 126. His presence at Rome desired both by the populace and the senate, 126. Infamous debauchery publicly encouraged by him, 127. The great fire of Rome imputed by the popu- lace to Nero himself, 132. Nero the first persecutor of the Christians, at Rome, 184, 216, vii. 285. The rebuilding of the city, vi. 137. Extension of Nero's palace, or golden house, 198. His exactions and con- fiscations required to defray his expenses,

141. Discontent of the nobles who form a conspiracy, and place Piso at their head, 145. Plans and names of the conspirators, 145, 146. Discovery of the plot, and punishment of the conspirators, 149, 150. Nero's performance in the theatre, 155. Death of Poppea, 156. Her eulogy pronounced by Nero, 156. Who proscribes C. Cassius and L. Silanus, 157. Puts Lucius Vetus and his family to death, 158. Destroys Patus Thrasea and Barea Soranus, 165 *et seq.* General religious toleration in his reign, 223. His government supported by the voluptuousness and cruelty of the age, 225. His figure and dress, 246. His vanity and love of admiration, 247. Vulgar ideas of magnificence; wants the imaginative power of Caius Cæsar, 248. His disregard of decorum, 250. His superstition, 250. His favourites Helius, Tigellinus, Doryphorus, and Sporus despised and shunned by the upper classes, 251. His impiety in bathing in the basin of the Aqua Marcia, 250. His cruelties capricious, not politic, like those of Tiberius, 252. His proscriptions of the senate, 252. His visit to the East in A.D. 66, 268. Probable object of his visit, 268. His progress through Greece described, 269. His triumphs at the Grecian games, 269. Proclaims the freedom of Achaia, 270. Projects cutting through the isthmus of Corinth, but abandons the design, 271. Political motive of the visit; jealousy of Corbulo, 271. Puts Corbulo to death, 272. Shrinks from visiting Athens and from initiation into the mysteries of Eleusis, 273. Why the Romans were indignant at his acting and singing, 274. Plunders Greece of her monuments of art, 275. Entrusts Rome to the care of Helius during his absence, 276. His triumphal entry into Rome, 277. Discontent in the provinces, 279. Virginus, Vindex, and Galba, Macer, and Fontelus conspire against him, 279-282. His vacillating humour on hearing of the conspiracy, 283. His last hours and death, 285-287. Expectation of his return among both Romans and Christians, 289, 290. Measures for the punishment of his favourites, 302.
- Nero, a pretending, in Domitian's reign, supported by the Parthians, vi. 290; vii. 110.
- Neronia, games instituted by Nero, vi. 109.
- Nerva, M. Cocceius, negotiates terms of an arrangement between Octavius and Antonius, iii. 183.
- Nerva, M. Cocceius, accompanies Tiberius on quitting Rome, v. 195. His reputation as a lawyer, 241. Vainly dissuaded from suicide by Tiberius, 242; vii. 239.
- Nerva, M. Cocceius, son of the preceding, conducts an inquiry into the conspiracy of Piso, vi. 151. Rewarded with a triumphal statue, 151.
- Nerva, M. Cocceius, his life saved by a superstition of Domitian, vii. 152. Elected emperor by the senate, 153. His origin, life, and character, 159, 160. Recalls the exiles, and prosecutes the delators, 163. His clemency, 164. His qualities misconstrued, 166. His moderation mingled with timidity, 165. Conspiracy of Calpurnius Crassus, vii. 167. Mutiny of the prætorians, 167. Nerva gives way to their demands, but immediately adopts Trajan for his partner, 168. His death, 169. His personal appearance, 169. His wisdom in adopting Trajan, 171.
- Nervii, a Belgic tribe, i. 225. Join a confederacy against the Romans, 267. Surprise Cæsar's camp, 274.
- Nicæa besieged by the Ligurians, i. 195.
- Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, cedes his dominions to Rome, iv. 105.
- Nicopolis, the Actian, site of, iii. 248, 257.
- Nicopolis, the Egyptian, founded, iii. 281.
- Nigidius, the astrologer, his prophecy respecting Octavius, iii. 60.
- Nigrinus, put to death by the senate for conspiring against Hadrian, vii. 335.
- Nile, battle of the, ii. 262, 263. The canal from to the Red Sea repaired by Petronius, iv. 101. Exploration of the country 900 miles above Syene in the time of Nero, vi. 268.
- Nisibis taken by Trajan, vii. 304.
- Nismes, amphitheatre at, built, vii. 404.
- Norbanus, commands a division of the triumvirs' forces in Macedonia, iii. 161.
- Noricans, the, defeated by P. Silius, iv. 160.
- Normandy, tribes of, subdued by the Romans, i. 294.
- Noviodunum (Nevers), capital of the Suesiones, besieged and taken by Cæsar, i. 270, 271; ii. 16. Destroyed by the Gauls, 24.
- Novius, the questor, his punishment, i. 144.
- Numidia reduced by Cæsar to the form of a province, ii. 304.
- Nymphæa, bath houses on the margin of the Alban lake, vii. 272.
- Nymphidius Sabinus, prefect of the prætorians, deserts Nero, vi. 285. Offers to support Galba, 298. His offer rejected, 294. His attempt to seize the empire, 294. Killed by the prætorians, 295.
- O**BELISK, the first, introduced into Europe, iv. 25.
- Obodes, king of the Nabathæan Arabs, iv. 97, 114.
- Obultronius, his pretensions to the empire, vi. 295.
- Octavia, own sister of Octavius, and wife (1) of Marcellus and (2) of M. Antonius, iii. 183. Her virtues, 185. Her son, M. Marcellus, 188. Winters with Antonius at Athens (A.U. 715-716), 190. Left with her brother by Antonius as a pledge of amity, 198. Brings men and money to Antonius, but is commanded to remain at Athens, 224. Returns to Rome, 224. Her reception there, 224. Takes charge of her own and Fulvia's children by Antonius, 224. Divorced by Antonius, 241, 243. Respect paid by Augustus to her, iv. 92. Her son Marcellus married to Julia, her younger daughter Marcella to Agrippa, 127. Regard entertained by the Romans for her, 128. Virgil's lines on the death of her son Marcellus recited to her, 133. Her death, 132. Extraordinary honours paid

- to her memory, 183. Her elder daughter Marcella married to Julius Antonius, iii. 271 *note* i; iv. 136, 183 *note* i.
- Octavia, daughter of Claudius and Messalina, prevented from seeing her father, v. 453. Betrothed to Nero, 438, 442. Married to him, 452. Her fall, banishment and death, vi. 116-124.
- Octavius, C. See Augustus.
- Octavius, serves under Crassus in the war against the Parthians, i. 426. Commands a Pompeian fleet, ii. 259. Cuts off Gabinus's supplies, 266. Compelled to sail for Africa, 266.
- Ocellus, capital of the Veragri, i. 287. Occupied by S. Galba, 287.
- Ocellus, one of the leaders of the revolted gladiators, i. 51 *note*.
- Oligarchy of Rome. See Patricians.
- Olympicum, the, at Athens, completed by Hædren, vii. 357.
- Ombi and Tentyra, the bloody quarrel of, vii. 375.
- Opimius, the consul, defeats the Ligurians, i. 195.
- Opplius, C., a friend of Caesar's, his character, ii. 349, 350.
- Oratory, character of Roman, ii. 422.
- Orbis pictus, or map of the world, of Agrippa, iii. 422; iv. 323.
- Oront, or Charonitis, origin of the name, iii. 52.
- Orestilla, wife of Cn. Piso, divorced, espoused, and repudiated by Caius Caesar, v. 367.
- Orgetorix, a chieftain of the Helvetii, his ambition, i. 248. His intrigues and sudden death, 249, 249.
- Orodes, king of Parthia, complains of the invasion of Crassus, i. 416. Attacks Artabazes, king of Armenia, 422. The head and hand of Crassus sent to him by his general Surinas, 428. Comes to terms with Artabazes, 429. Throws the Roman ambassador Hirtius into chains, ii. 242. Invades Syria, iii. 191. Abdicates and is murdered by his son Phraates, 229.
- Osismii, the, compelled to submit to the Romans, i. 281. Join a maritime confederacy against the Romans, 280.
- Ostia, harbour of, insulted by the Cilician pirates, i. 47 *note*. The new haven of Claudius, v. 891.
- Ostotus Sculpia, his campaigns in Britain, vi. 28, *et seq.* Founds the colony of Camulodunum, 30. Defeats Camotenus, 35. His death, 38. His son destroyed by Nero, 161.
- Otho, Salvius, companion of Nero's youth, vi. 69. Husband of Poppæa, 97. Governs Lusitania ten years, 97, 303. Declares for Galba, 282. Mortified by Galba's adopting Piso, he aspires to the empire, 303. Tamper with the soldiers, 304. Goes to the prætorian camp, 306. Proclaimed emperor by the guards, and leads them to the Forum, 309, 310. Galba assassinated, 311. Otho hailed as Otho-Nero by the populace, 315. Threatened with a rival in Vitellius, 315. Vitellius marches southward to contest the empire, 321, *et seq.* Otho offers terms, but prepares for war, 324. His government conciliatory to the senate and the provinces, 325. The senate suspected of treachery to him, 327. His means to cheer himself and ally, 328. Distracts his officers, 329. Throws off his dissolute habits and marches at the head of his troops, 330. Operations of his fleet on the Ligurian coast, 331. At Phœstia and Bæcænan, 332. Defeated at Bedriacum, 335. Declines to renew the contest, and slays himself, 336, 337. Motives for his suicide, 337.
- Ovid, banishment of, ii. 267. Speculations on his cause, 268-269. Character of his poetry, 268. An admirer of Parthenius, 462. Survey of his poems, 462-463. Suffered to languish in exile by Tibullus, v. 29. His death, iv. 466. Compared with Statius, vii. 292.
- Oxybi, a Ligurian tribe, marked out for Roman vengeance, i. 195.
- PACONIVS AGRIPPINVS** charged by Nero with dereliction of his senatorial duties, vi. 171. His proscription, 172.
- Pacorus I., king of Parthia, marries a daughter of Artabazes, i. 423. Defeated by Cassius, ii. 36. Invades Syria, iii. 191. Sardin, 192.
- Pacorus II., king of Parthia, his interference with Armenia, vii. 297. Fears relations with Decabalus, 297. His death, 298.
- Pactand, a Bactrian tribe, i. 225. Join the confederacy formed against the Romans, 267.
- Pædus Postumus, commander of the 2nd legion in Britain, his cowardice, vi. 46. Commits suicide, 49.
- Pactus, Cæsarion, entrusted with the command in Cappadocia and Galatia, vi. 267. Two of his three legions taken by Vologases, king of Parthia, 267. Recalled by the emperor, 267.
- Pactes Tharsæa. See Tharsæa.
- Palaces of the emperors, their vast extent, vii. 267. The Golden House of Nero, vi. 138; vii. 36, 267. The floating palace on the lake of Nemi, 272.
- Palatine Hill, regarded by the Romans as the cradle of the city, i. 17. Contrast between it and the Aventine as sites for a city, 18. Demolition of Cæsar's house on the, 302. Temple of Apollo built by Augustus on the, iv. 25. Description of it, in the time of Augustus, 779.
- Palestine, kingdom of, conferred upon Herod, iii. 199. Impoverished by its conquerors, 280. Peculiarity of its geographical position, 280. Its liability to invasion, from its configuration, 280. Progress and extent of the Hellenic element among its population, 292. Antagonism of the Pharisees and Sadducees, 295, 296. The Pharisees the popular party, 297. Division of Palestine between the sons of Herod the Great, v. 289. Revolt of the Jews in Palestine in the reign of Trajan, vii. 307-314. Palestine placed under the control of Marius Turban, 301.
- Palmaris Sara, struck by Vespasian from the senatorian roll, and turns slave and sycophant under Domitian, vii. 130.

- Pallas, freedman of Claudius, v. 404. His wealth, 405. Extravagantly flattered by L. Vitellius, 417. Takes part against Messalina, 429. Supports Agrippina, 437. Becomes the paramour of Agrippina, 443. His pretended vigour and its reward, 450. Protects his brother Eelix against the Jews, 450. His intrigue with Agrippina, 455; vi. 64. Becomes obnoxious to Nero, vi. 64. And is disgraced, 72. Acquitted, 81. Put to death by Nero, 125.
- Palma, Cornelius, governor of Syria, his conquests in Arabia, vii. 200. Sentenced to death by the senate for intriguing against Hadrian, 335.
- Pandateria, Julia banished by Augustus to, iv. 211.
- Pandion, an Indian king, sends an embassy to Augustus, iv. 118.
- Pannonians, the, defeated by Octavius, iii. 238. By P. Silius, iv. 160. And by Agrippa, 166. Resume arms, 170. Tiberius sent against them, 170. Subjugated by Tiberius, 187. Fresh revolt of, in A.D. 6, 245, 246. Defeated by Cæcina, 247. Finally subjugated by Tiberius, 254. Discontent of the legions in Pannonia, v. 18. Drusus sent to quell the mutiny, 19. Number of legions stationed in Pannonia in the time of Tiberius, 142.
- Pansa, Vibius, a friend of Cæsar, his Epicurean tenets, ii. 352. Designated consul for A.U. 711, 365; iii. 82. His indolence, 105. Joins his colleague Hirtius in the Cisalpine, 118. Unites with Hirtius and Octavius to relieve Decimus in Mutina, 115. Mortally wounded at Forum Gallorum, 169. His death at Bononia, 125.
- Pantheon, building of the, iii. 389. Restored by Domitian, vii. 118.
- Pantomimes of the Romans, iv. 411.
- Paper imported into Rome from Egypt, iv. 815. Manufacture of, at Rome, 816.
- Papirius, a knight, killed by Clodius, i. 321.
- Papius, the tribune, his law *de peregrinis*, i. 105.
- Parætonium shuts its gates against Antonius, iii. 260.
- Parental authority among the Romans, ii. 410.
- Paris, the mime, put to death by Domitian for his intrigue with Domitia, vii. 110.
- Parks and gardens of the Romans, iv. 409.
- Parthamasiris, son of Pacorus, king of Parthia, proposed by Chosroes as a candidate for the Armenian crown, vii. 298. Lays his diadem at Trajan's feet; his dignified conduct in return for indignities offered him, and treacherous slaughter, vii. 301-303.
- Parthaspates, placed by Trajan on the throne of Parthia, vii. 307. Crowned by Trajan at Ctesiphon, 307.
- Parthia, rise of the monarchy of, i. 407. Arsacæes, 408. The Parthian court at Seleucia, 409. Parthian soldiers and their equipment, 409 *note* 2. The dynasty of the Arsacids obnoxious to its Persian subjects, 410. Invasion of Parthia by Crassus, 414. Preparations of the Parthians, 420. Their stratagem to mislead the enemy, 420, 421. Their general Surenas, 421. Engage the Romans, 424. Compel the Romans to retreat, 425. Entice Crassus and his staff into a conference, and murder them, 427. Amuse their subjects with the spectacle of a mock triumph, 428. Threaten an irruption into Roman territory, ii. 55. Cicero marches against them, 56. Their aggressions checked by Cassius, 56. Declaration of the Sibylline oracles that Parthia can only be conquered by a king, 467. Expedition of Ventidius in Parthia, iii. 190, 192. Adventures of Q. Labienus in Parthia, 190. Preparations of Antonius for war with Orodes, 190. Invasion of the Parthians in Syria, 192. Defeated with the loss of their generals, 192. First campaign of Antonius against them, 221. His disastrous retreat, 222. The alliance of the king of Parthia courted by Antonius, 237. Parthian affairs settled by Octavius, 281; iv. 115. Condition of Parthia at the beginning of the reign of Augustus, 115. Who compels the restoration of the standards of Crassus, 116. Political characteristics of the Parthians, 295. State of Parthia in A.D. 17, v. 51. Interference of Parthia with Armenia, vii. 297. This interference resisted by Trajan, 298. Internal dissensions in Parthia, which is invaded by Trajan, 305. The Parthians subdued by Trajan, 306. Who consents to restore the kingdom to a nominal sovereignty, 307. Visited by Hadrian, who arranges terms of peace and mutual forbearance, 362. Victories of Avidius Cassius over the Parthians, 455.
- Parthian games instituted in honour of Trajan, vii. 331.
- Passienus, his remark on Caligula, v. 252.
- Parthenius of Nicea, brought captive to Rome during the Mithridatic War, iv. 462. Gallas and Virgil among his disciples: imitated by Ovid and admired by Tiberius, 462.
- Paternus, lieutenant of M. Anrelius, his victory over the barbarians, vii. 474.
- Patiscus, joins the conspirators after Cæsar's murder, iii. 12.
- Patria carere*, what the Romans meant by, v. 196.
- Patricians and plebeians, struggle between the, i. 22. The contest transferred to the richer and poorer classes, 24. The Licinian rogations and the agrarian laws of the Gracchi, 26. Triumph of the popular party, 29. Reaction in favour of the oligarchy under Sulla, 31. Corruption of the provincial governors, 35. Moral superiority of the knights to the senators, 54. Position and policy of the senatorial party upon the death of Sulla, 59. Composition of the oligarchy, 61. Origin of the patricians, and their division into families, 61. Nature of the education of the Roman nobles, 61 *note*. In what nobility properly consisted, 62. The number of the senate fixed by Sulla at 600, 62. The great offices of state shared by only a few houses, 63, 64. Character of the principal oligarchical leaders, 64. Character of the nobles as a class, 81. Their ostentation

coupled with want of refinement, 52. Ferocity of the younger nobility, 55. The command of the national armies retained by the nobles, 56. Growth of the strength of the popular party, and fears and enmities of the patricians, 57, 58. Indignation of the nobles at the restoration of the trophies of Marius, 104. Their retaliation, 105. Weapons of the popular party in Caesar's hands, 106, 109, 112. Destruction of the civil influence of the nobles, 118. Who seek to implicate Caesar and Cressus in a charge of conspiracy, 119. Failure of the attempt, 120. Violence of the nobles and discontent of the people, 124. Their extravagance and profuseness, 127. Their preparations against the designs imputed to Pompeius, 140. Harnessed by Caesar and Metellus Nepos, 141. Triumph of the nobles in the Forum, 143. Caesar insulted by the nobles, who are compelled to make reparation, 143. Attempts of the patricians to turn the profanity of Clodius to political account, 147, 148. Failure of their proceedings against Clodius, 151. Their violent contest with Caesar, 172. Caesar's agrarian bill forced upon them, 173. Their ingratitude to the Allobroges, 210. Competition of the nobles in the commission for the settlement of Egyptian affairs, 328. The nobles abandoned by Cicero, 335. Their power as a class overruled by the enormous resources of individuals in the state, 350. Their selfishness and blindness in the crisis of their fate, 351. The alliance of the oligarchy courted by the consul Cn. Pompeius, ii. 45. Dissatisfaction of the nobles at the inaction of Pompeius, 78. Prepare to oppose Caesar's measures by force, 83. Their forces, 84-85. Assign the provinces to the leaders of the senate, 86. Their indignation at the abandonment of Italy by Pompeius, 111. Their muster in Pompeius's camp, 190. Their arrogance, intrigue, and mutual jealousies, 225, 226. Their dissatisfaction with Cicero, 229. Make their submission to Caesar, 277. Their adulation of him, 343. Decision of the senate respecting his murderers, iii. 27. The nobles reassured by the moderation of Antonius, 44. Conservation of the patrician caste, iv. 19. The principle of adoption, 20. Increase of the patrician houses at the commencement of the empire, 21. Religious functions of patrician houses, 22. The mansions of the nobles in Rome described, 392. Sketch of a Roman noble's mode of passing a day, 420. His business in the morning, 421. His midday siesta, 422. His afternoon: the field of Mars, 422. His evening: the supper, 423. Horace employed by Augustus to recommend moderation and contentment to the restless nobles, 456. Their licentiousness as a class, v. 233. Spite of the emperor Caligula against their insignia, 387. His bantering humour and systematic persecution of them, 340. State of the patrician education in the 2nd century of the Christian era, vi. 56. Vicious moral training of the young nobles, 61. Grow-

ing discontent of the class in the latter part of the reign of Nero, 144. Impoverishment of the old families at the time of the Christian Cæsars, 254. But general wealth of the upper classes, 254. Trajan's measures for maintaining the dignity of the senate, vii. 212. Examples of the habits of the more refined and intelligent among the nobles, 262. Magnificence of their dwellings, 267. Ravages of the position of the nobles in the age of the Flavians, 481, *et seq.*

Paul, 82. special applicability of his teaching to the Jews and principalities of Rome, vi. 719. His epistle to the Romans and tradition of his intercourse with *Baronius* or *Sextus*, 212, 213. His imprisonment at Rome, 214. Set at liberty, 216. Story of his return to, and decapitation at, Rome, 223.

Paulinus, Suetonius, his *compositus* in Britain, vi. 42, *et seq.* Removed from his command, 50.

Pedius, Julius, put to death for insubordination, vi. 384.

Pedius, L. Annius, elected consul, ii. 58. Proscribed by the *triumviri*, iii. 140.

Pedius, L. Annius, grand nephew of Lepidus, marries Julia, granddaughter of Augustus, iv. 256. Banishment of his wife, 257.

Pax Romana, or idea of universal peace, iv. 344. Troops and fortifications by which this peace was secured, 344. War of opinion silently generated beneath the surface of the Roman peace, 347. Pearls of the coast of Britain, i. 383.

Pellies, Q., a triumph granted to, ii. 357. Elected consul with Octavius, iii. 192. Notice of him, 192. Proposes a bill for the condemnation of Caesar's murderers, 193. Proposes the restoration to favour of Antonius and Lepidus, 194. Alters the fears of the citizens, 141. Dies suddenly, 142.

Pedo Albinovanus, his poem on Drusus's expedition into Germany, ix. 189 *note*.

Pelo, consul, lost in the earthquake at Antioch, vii. 269.

Pegasus, prefect of the city under Domitian, vii. 140.

Pella, L., his profligate corruption, iii. 165.

Pelustium taken by Mithridates, king of Pontus, ii. 262.

Penna reduced by Vespasian, vi. 437, 438.

Pergamus, exactions of Antonius in, iii. 173, 174.

Peripplus of the Euxine and Erythrean seas, ascribed to Arrian, vii. 402.

Perperna, compelled by his soldiers to take them over to Sertorius, i. 89. Assassinated Sertorius, and takes command of the revolted Iberians, 42. Defeated by Cn. Pompeius, and put to death, 42.

Persia, reign of the Arsacide in, i. 410.

Persius, Aulus, pupil of the state Cornutus, his life and writings, vi. 233, 234. Compared with Juvenal, 233.

Perusia, L. Antonius besieged by Octavius in, iii. 180. Famine in, 180. Capitulates, 180. Destroyed by fire, 180.

Pestilence spread by an army on its way

- from the East, vii. 461. Its disastrous effects on the empire, 466.
- Petra, Pompeius blockaded within his lines, by Cæsar at, ii. 206. Operations before, 218.
- Petra, the rock-hewn city, chief emporium of the eastern trade with Rome, iv. 95. Acquired by the Romans, vii. 201.
- Petrelus, M., defeats and destroys Catilina and his army, i. 182. Opposes the arrest of M. Cato, 172. Legatus of Pompeius in Spain, ii. 180. His campaign and ferocity, 182-184. Joins the defeated Pompeians at Patræ, 288. Defeats Cæsar in Numidia, 291. Slain by Juba, 302.
- Petronius Arbitrator, authorship of the "Satiricon" of, vi. 164.
- Petronius, C., prefect of Egypt, his improvements in the province, iv. 102. Which he defends from an attack of the Ethiopians, 102.
- Petronius, C., governor of Bithynia, proscribed, vi. 162. His character and death, 163.
- Petronius, Roman governor of Judea, ordered to put up a statue of Caius in the temple of Jerusalem, v. 816, 819.
- Petronius Turpilianus, his prefecture in Britain, vii. 69.
- Phædrus, the fabulist, supposed to have been a freedman of Tiberius, v. 262. His writings unnoticed for four centuries, 262.
- Phagita, Cornelius, seizes Cæsar, i. 94 *note* 2.
- Phaon, freedman of Nero, vi. 286.
- Pharasmales, king of the Alani, Hadrian's treatment of, vii. 380.
- Pharisees, their tenacity of the Law and national ideas, iii. 295. Their antagonism with the Sadducees, 295. But the Sadducees the popular party in Palestine, 297.
- Pharnaces of Pontus, revolts against his father Mithridates, i. 188. His treason rewarded with the kingdom of the Bosphorus, 188. Attempts to recover his father's empire, ii. 264. Defeats Cæsar's lieutenant Calvinus, 265. But defeated by Cæsar at Zela, 272. His death, 272.
- Pharos, the island of, the key of Egypt by sea, ii. 259. Occupied by Cæsar, 259, 262.
- Pharsalia, position of the armies of Cæsar and Pompeius in the plain of, ii. 227. Defeat of Pompeius at, 236. "Pharsalia," the, of Lucan, vi. 243; vii. 223.
- Philadelphus, king of Paphlagonia, an Antonian, goes over to the Octavianus, iii. 249.
- Philagrus, the sophist, professor at Athens, vii. 861.
- Philippic orations, the, of Cicero, analyzed, iii. 86-149.
- Philippi, battle of, iii. 162-169.
- Philippus, Marcus, his fish-ponds, i. 84. Elected consul, 331. Goes into mourning and refuses to perform his duties, 339. Husband of Atha, and step-father of Octavianus, ii. 395; iii. 57, 58. Sent by the senate to treat with Antonius, 106.
- Philippus, son of Herod the Great, married to his niece Herodias, v. 274. Repudiated by his wife, 277.
- Philo Judæus, his mission to Catus Cæsar, v. 316. His account of the interview with the emperor in the gardens of Mæcenas, 318, 319.
- Philogonus, betrays Cicero to his assassins, iii. 147.
- Philopator, king of Cilicia, dethroned by Augustus, iv. 109.
- Philosophy and philosophers; alliance of philosophers at Rome, with religion and government, vi. 188. Attitude of opposition to government first assumed by the Stoics under the empire, 189. Seneca's political and moral teaching, 231. The philosophy of the Stoics, 238. No political philosophy in the writings of Persius, 234. Lucan's "Pharsalia," 235. His views of philosophy, 240. Measures of Vespasian against the philosophers, vii. 80. Helvidius Priscus the only martyr to philosophy, 81. Domitian's edicts against the philosophers, 111, 148. Mutual approximation of the sects of philosophy in the time of Trajan, 254. The Stoics and Epicureans, 254. Character of the professional system established at the University of Athens, 360-362.
- Philostratus, his life of Apollonius unworthy of credit, vii. 365.
- Phœnicia, its submission to Pompeius, i. 138.
- Phraates, becomes king of Parthia, iii. 220. Overthrown by Tiridates, and has an asylum granted him by Octavius, 281.
- Phyllis, Domitian's nurse, her fidelity to his remains, vii. 162.
- Pialia, establishment of the festival of the, vii. 397, *note* 1.
- Pictones, a Gallic tribe, i. 215. Revolt of the, put down, ii. 37.
- Pilatus, Pontius, procurator of Judæa, his government, recall, and banishment, v. 270, 271.
- Pinarius refuses to admit Antonius into Parætanium, iii. 260. Hands over his command to Cornelius Gallus, 263.
- Pincian Hill, the, described, iv. 837.
- Pindarus, freedman of Cassius, whom he kills, iii. 167.
- Pinnes, the Illyrian chief, his revolt, iv. 247. Betrayed to the Romans, 255.
- Pirates, Cilician, origin of the, i. 45. Causes of their prosperity, 46. Reduced by Pompeius, 48.
- Pirustæ, the, of the Tyrol, i. 834.
- Pisidia, given by Antonius to Amyntas, iii. 190.
- Piso, C. Calpurnius, charges preferred against him by Cæsar, i. 112. Implicated in the conspiracy of Catilina, 114. His death, 115.
- Piso, L. Calpurnius, his daughter married to Cæsar, i. 177. Elected consul, 177. His treatment of Cicero, 183. Clodius assigns him the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, 305. Takes part with Clodius against Pompeius, 321. His recall obtained by Cicero, 337. Demands a public funeral for Cæsar, iii. 28. Chief mourner, 37. His furious invective against Antonius in the senate, 82. Sent by the senate to treat with Antonius, 104.

- Piso, Cn. Calpurnius, appointed by Tiberius governor of Syria, v. 61. His pride, insolence to Germanicus, and corruption of the soldiers, 61, 62. Undertakes the cause of the Parthian prince Vologases, 64. Overrides the regulations of Germanicus, and prepares to quit his province, 66. Suspected of having poisoned Germanicus, 69. His insolent exultation at the death of Germanicus, 70. Chafes the government of Syria, 71. His violent measures, 71. Compelled by the friends of Germanicus to return to Rome, 72. Appeals to Tiberius, 77. His deliberate journey to Italy, 78. His trial and defence, 79, 80. Deserted by his wife Plautina, he commits suicide, 84. Rumour that he was put to death by Tiberius unfairly countenanced by Tacitus, 85. The sentence of the senate upon him instigated by Tiberius, 86. Execution of his wife, 244.
- Piso, Cn. Calpurnius, his wife Orestilla taken from him by the emperor Caligula, v. 307. Restored to favour by Claudius, and raised to the consulship, vi. 143. Heads a conspiracy against Nero, 145.
- Piso Galerianus, son of the last, put to death by Maximian, vi. 876.
- Piso Licinianus, chosen by Galba as his colleague in the empire, vi. 208. Prosecuted by Galba to the soldiers, 301. The adoption accepted with satisfaction by the senate, 301. Murdered by Otho, 311.
- Piso, L., cousin of the last, put to death, vi. 377.
- Piso, L., extinguishes an insurrection in Thrace and Maesia, iv. 188. Defends Cn. Piso charged with murder, v. 80. Prefect of the city and chief pontiff, his character, 245.
- Piso, Pupius, consul, his behaviour in the affair of Claudius, i. 148.
- Placentia, destroyed by the Gauls under Ambiorix, i. 192. Held for Otho, vi. 302. Unsuccessfully attacked by the Vitellians, 302.
- Placidius, lieutenant of Vespasian, repulsed at Jotapata, vi. 424.
- Plautia, Agrippa Postumus banished to, iv. 258.
- Plautina, daughter of Munatius Plancus, wife of Cn. Piso, v. 61. Her friendship with Livia Augusta, 61. The rival of Agrippina, 61. Her arrogant conduct in Syria, 62. Included in the accusation of her husband of having poisoned Germanicus, 69. Separates her cause from his, 84. Protected by Livia, 86. But at last condemned by Tiberius, 244.
- Plancus, Munatius, brought to the bar of justice, ii. 44. Nominated consul by Caesar, 365. Commands in Further Gaul, iii. 98, 105, 109. Crosses the Rhone, but shrinks from attacking Antonius, 129. Joined by Decimus Brutus, 127. Appointed consul, triumphs, and demands the proscription of his brother, 157. Fails to relieve L. Antonius in Perusia, 179. Flees with Fulvia to Athens, 181. In Syria, 205. Death of Sextus Pompeius ascribed to him, 205. His buffooneries in Alexandria, 208. Deserts Antonius, and disposes his will, 241. Feigns Lugdunum, iv. 76.
- Plautia Ursulanilla, married to Claudius, v. 329. Reproached for adultery, 330.
- Plautius Rufus, his seditious placards posted about Rome, iv. 259.
- Plautius Sylvanus, Tiberius's treatment of, v. 184.
- Plébeians and patricians, struggle between the, i. 21. Triumph of the popular party, 28. Reaction in favour of the oligarchy under Sulla, 31, 32.
- Plinius, takes comment of the retirement of the Pompeians in Italy, viii. 30. Gains over Lepidus and his ingenuities, 202.
- Pliny, the elder, his extraordinary literary activity, v. 187. His death from the eruption of Vesuvius, vii. 54, 59. Pliny considered as a natural philosopher, 205. Account of him, and of his mode of life, as given by his nephew, 264.
- Pliny the younger, his description of the great eruption of Vesuvius, vii. 55-61. Patronized by Domitian, 193. His consulship, 196. His attack on Cerialis, 164. His "Panegyric on Trajan," vii. 180, 409. Account of him, his friends, and correspondents, 250, 294. His mode of life, 265. His *Letter to the Younger Pliny* described, 268, 269. His letter to Trajan respecting his proceedings against the Christians, 288. His testimony to their virtues, 291, 409.
- Plotina, wife of Trajan, her magnanimity, vii. 176. Favors Hadrian, 226. Intercedes with Trajan for the adoption of Hadrian as his successor, 379. Her death, 380. The passion excited by Hadrian at Nymphis to her honour, 389.
- Plutarch, his philosophical and historical works, *Isotopes and opinions*, vii. 344, 345. Compared with Appian, 266.
- Poses, Roman, of scholastic training, vii. 228.
- Polono, king of Pontus and the Bosphorus, favoured by Augustus, iv. 311.
- Pompeia, receives the throne of Cilicia from Antiochus, iii. 129.
- Potamo, crowned king of Armenia by Germanicus, v. 63.
- Potamon, the sophist, exempted from taxes by Trajan, vii. 306. The favorite of Hadrian, 303. Character of his eloquence, and death, 308. His rudeness to Antonius Pius, 365.
- Police of Italy in the reign of Tiberius, v. 143.
- Politox, the III. 421.
- Polzo, C. Asinius, his escape from the massacre of the Romans by Juba, ii. 163. His spiteful detraction of Caesar, 209. His services and character as a personal friend of Caesar, 348. Receives the province of Further Spain, 366. Left to suppress a revolt under Sextus Pompeius, iii. 75. Commands for the republic in Spain, 109, 124. Shrinks from attacking Antonius and Lepidus, 126. Appointed to command in the Transpadane province for Antonius, 177. Countenances the enterprise of L. Antonius, 179. Superseded in

- the Cisalpine by Alfenus Varus, 181. Negotiates terms between Antonius and Octavius, 188. Devotes himself to studious indolence, 217. His library, founded for the use of the citizens, 235. Excused from arming against his friend Antonius, 249.
- Pollus, Statius's description of the Surrentine villa of, vii. 269.
- Polybius, the freedman of Augustus, v. 408. Polybius, a freedman of Claudius, v. 404. A friend of Seneca, banished by Messalina, 424. Seneca's "*Consolatio ad Polybium*," 461.
- Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, his martyrdom, vii. 490.
- Polycletus, freedman of Vitellius, vi. 854.
- Pompela, married to Cæsar, i. 113 *note* 4. Divorced by him for her intrigue with Clodius, 152. Torture of her slave Abra, 152.
- Pompeii, city of, its destruction, first by an earthquake, and secondly by the lava of Vesuvius, vii. 57. Different accounts of the event, 57, 59.
- Pompeii, family of the, traditions connected with the fall of the, iii. 205.
- Pompeopolis, the name of Soli changed to, i. 48.
- Pompeius, Strabo, father of Cn. Pompeius, i. 68. Gives the *Jus Latii* to the Transpadanes, ii. 62. His interview with Scato, iii. 118.
- Pompeius, Cnæus, Magnus, his contest with Sertorius in Spain, i. 40. Saved from total rout by Metellus, 40. Quells the revolt of the Iberians, 42, 69. Entrusted with the war with Mithridates, 45. Reduces the Cilician pirates, 48. Assists in crushing the revolt of Spartacus, 52. His early history, 68-70. His policy, 70. Unites with Crassus and Cicero in transferring the *Judicia* to the knights, 72. Powers conferred on him by the Gabinian and Manilian Laws, 74. His war with Mithridates 78, 186. Commencement of his intercourse with Cæsar, 100. Suspected by the nobles, 184. Conquers Tigranes, 187. Desists from the pursuit of Mithridates, 187. Settles the affairs of Syria and Palestine, 188, 189. Decides between the claims of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus to the throne of Judea, iii. 299. Preparations of the nobles against designs imputed to him, i. 140. Returns to Italy, and disbands his army, 149. Reserved towards the senate and Cicero, 150. Presses the senate to ratify his acts, 153. His triumph, 158. The first Roman represented by a naked statue, 159 *note* 5. His demands for an agrarian law, 160. Intrigues for his own aggrandizement, 158-163. Divorces his wife Mucia, 160. His weakness, dissimulation, and overtures to Cæsar, 163-166. The nominal head of the first triumvirate, 168. Conspiracy alleged by Vettius against his wife, 174. Offers his hand to Julia, Cæsar's daughter, 176. The senate warned by Cato against him, 176. His behaviour to Cicero, 182-184. Reduces the Gauls to subjection, 211. His villa at Tusculum, 305. Turns against Clodius, and assists in the recall of Cicero, 321, 322. His commission for provisioning Rome, 324. His dissension with Crassus, 329. His anxiety to obtain the consulship, 330. Opposed by the existing consuls, 381. Reconciled to Crassus by Cæsar's intervention, 388. Defended by Cicero, 387. Elected consul, 389. Changes his policy, 340. Spain assigned to him, 341. His danger at an election, 344. Seeks to ingratiate himself with the populace, 344. His theatre, 344. Governs Spain while remaining in Rome, 346. His fresh dissensions with Crassus, 348. Foment the consular electoral confusions, 360. Death of his wife Julia, 362. His connection with Cæsar weakened by this event, 362, 363, 405. Lends a legion to Cæsar for his sixth campaign, 398. Returns to his aristocratic opinions, puts an end to the interregnum, and procures the election of the consuls, 432. The substance of the dictatorship thrust into his hands, 437. Declared sole consul and presides at the trial of Milo, 438. Compared with Sulla, ii. 40. His reforms, conduct at the head of affairs, and salutary administration, 42-46. Courts the oligarchy, marries Cornelia, and takes her father Scipio for his colleague in the consulship, 47. His inconsistent and arbitrary conduct, and unfairness to Cæsar, 47. His double dealing with regard to Cæsar's petition for the consulship, 48. Supports the decree of M. Marcellus, aimed directly against Cæsar, 60. His sickness at Neapolis, 63. Grief of the Italians, and enthusiasm at his recovery, 64. Required by the senate to surrender a legion, 19. Demands a legion from Cæsar, 72. Nominated guardian of the city, 74. His idle boast, 75. His inaction, and interview with Cicero, 79. His equivocal position and military force, 84. Retires from Rome on the news of Cæsar's passage of the Rubicon and conceals his plans, 98. Has an interview with Cicero at Formiæ, 98. His want of principle, 95. His negotiations with Cæsar, 98. Joined by Labienus at Teanum, 99. Falls back upon Luceria, 102. Retreats to Brundisium and prepares to cross over to Epirus, 107. Quits Italy, 108. Indignation of the nobles at his conduct, and probable motives for it, 111-117. Proclaims war against Rome, 118. Preparations of his lieutenants in Spain to meet Cæsar, 133. Pompeius's road across the Pyrenees, 182. Sends L. Nasidius with a fleet to Massilia, 156. His position compared with that of Cæsar, 186. Enumeration of his forces, 187-189. Moves from Thessalonica, and forms lines before Dyrrhachium, 198. Dislodged, but takes position at Petru, where he is blockaded by Cæsar, 206. Maintains his ground and gains advantages at sea, 212, 213. Defeats the Cæsarians before Petru, 218-220. Triumph of his military skill, 220. Exultation and violence of his partizans, 224. Accepts the title of Imperator, but declines a general engagement, 221. Compelled by his partizans to follow Cæsar into

- Thessaly, 225-227. His position in the plain of Pharsalia, 227. Offers battle, 229. Routed and flies, 235, 236. Escapes to the sea coast, embarks, and takes up his wife Cornelia and his son Sextus at Lesbos, 242. Requests an asylum at Alexandria, is invited to land, and treacherously murdered, 244-246. Reflections on his death, 247. Final disposal of his remains, 249.
- Pompeius, Cnaeus, son of Magnus, brings reinforcements to his father from Alexandria, II. 183. His exploits at sea, 213. His violence to Cicero at Coreyra, 251. His estates confiscated by Caesar, 279. Joins Cato, and is left in charge of the Pompeian fleet in the Lesser Syrtis, 283, 284. Urged by Cato to revive the war in Spain, is repulsed in Mauretania, and takes refuge in the Balearic isles, 288. Sick in the Balearics, 305. Takes the command of the Pompeians in Spain, 315. Views the contest as a private quarrel, 315. Is defeated at Munda by Caesar, overtaken, and slain, 316, 317.
- Pompeius, Q., Rufus, tribune, grandson of Sulla, his daughter Pompeia married to Caesar, I. 103 *note* 1. Imprisoned by the senate, 431. Brought to the bar of justice, II. 44.
- Pompeius Sextus, son of Magnus, accompanies his father from Pharsalia, II. 242. His estate confiscated by Caesar, 279. Flies with Cornelia to Africa, 283. Sole survivor of the senatorian leaders, 317. Asinius Pollio sent against him, 366. His struggle against the Caesarian lieutenants in Spain, III. 18. His successes in the south of Spain, 75. Appointed to the command of the republican navy, 122. Raises the standard of liberty in Macedonia, 145. Seizes upon Sicily, 160, 173, 182. Octavius arms against him, 161. Defeats Salvidienus, 161. His increasing power in the islands, 179. Joins Antonius against Octavius, 182. Hovers round the coast of Lucania and Apulia, 182. His character as drawn by Velleius, 185, 186. Accepts overtures from the triumvirs, and admitted into partnership with them by the treaty of Misenum, 187. Breaks the treaty, 193. Defeats Octavius, 194. But does not profit by his victory, 195. Again defeats Octavius, 200. Routed by Agrippa, and escapes into the East, 201. His subsequent career, capture by the Antonians, and death, 203-205.
- Pomponius Graecina, an early Christian, story of, VI. 215.
- Pomponianus put to death by Domitian, VII. 147.
- Pons, Elii (Newcastle-on-Tyne), VII. 347.
- Pont du Gard, construction of the aqueduct of the, VII. 405.
- Ponticus, his martyrdom at Lyons, VII. 382.
- Pontifex Maximus, Caesar elected to the office of, I. 113. Importance of the supreme pontificate, III. 371. The pontifices, epulones, quindecimvirs, and augurs, 371. Augustus pontiff, 371.
- Pontiffs, college of, duties of the, III. 371.
- Pontius Aquila, his rudeness to Caesar, II. 361.
- Pontius Pilatus. See Pilatus.
- Pontus, kingdom of, given by Antonius to a son of Pharnaces, III. 190.
- Popilius, peris Cicero to death, III. 147.
- Poppea, her connection with Valerius Asiaticus, V. 416. Commits suicide, 417.
- Poppea Sabina, wife (1.) of Rufus Cresspinus, (2.) of Otho, VI. 97. Her beauty, character, and intrigue with Nero, 97. Exasperates him against Agrippina, 99. Demands Octavius' death, 122. Marries Nero, 123. Her death and divine honours paid her, 126, 288.
- Population of Rome, accurate returns of, III. 420; IV. 329. Of the empire, 332. Of Italy, 323-333. Of the provinces, 343-343. Ancient and modern population of the Roman dominions compared, 343, 344. Approximate estimate of the population of Rome: 1. From the area of the city, 394. And extent of the suburbs, 396. 2. From the recorded number of houses, 398. 3. From the number of recipients of grain, 399. Exaggerations of ancient and modern authorities, 401. The circumstances of Rome do not admit of a very large population, 403. The population of the Roman provinces in the reign of Antoninus Pius, VII. 417. Decrease of the population, and its causes, at the death of M. Aurelius, 481. See also Census.
- Porcia, wife of M. Brutus, III. 70. Her courage and resolution, 72. Death of her husband, 160. Commits suicide, 179.
- Porus, an Indian king, sends an embassy to Augustus, IV. 118.
- Posidonius, his travels in Gaul, I. 212.
- Post system of the Roman empire, IV. 80.
- Postumus, helps to defray the expense of the shows in honour of Caesar, III. 63.
- Potestas tribunicia, the conferred on Augustus for life, III. 342.
- Pothinus, the Greek eunuch, counsellor of Ptolemæus XII. of Egypt, II. 244. Put to death by Caesar, 260.
- Potinus, his martyrdom at Lyons, VII. 400, 245.
- Praspa, capital of Media Atropatene, besieged by Antonius, III. 221.
- Præneste, outbreak of the gladiators at, VI. 143.
- Prætorian cohorts, establishment of the, III. 412. Number of, in the time of Tiberius, V. 142. The prætorian camp established by Sejanus, 173. Carry off Claudius to their camp and swear allegiance to him, 367. The prætorians recruited in Italy, VI. 257. Their pay and privileges, 268. Proclaim Otho emperor, and murder Galba and Piso, 306-312. Disbanded by Vitellius, 343. Re-embodied by Vespasius, 354. Their camp stormed and taken by the Flavians, 379. Original object of the prætorian guard, VII. 442. Its decline and fall, 442.
- Prætors, position and duties of the, under the empire, III. 400. Character of their perpetual edicts, VII. 426.
- Prusagatus, king of the Icenii, submits to Rome, VI. 28. His death, 44. Indignities

- to which his wife and children were submitted, 44.
- Prefect of the city, his duties under the empire, iii. 402. Formal institution of the prefecture of the city, iv. 145.
- Prefects of the provinces, character of their edicts, vii. 426.
- Priscianus, conspires against Antoninus Pius, and slays himself, vii. 399.
- Priscus, Lutorius, found guilty of constructive treason, and executed, v. 126.
- Priscus, prefect of the prætorians, his suicide, vi. 376.
- Proculus, Scribonius, killed in the senate house, v. 360.
- Proculus, put to death by Nero, vi. 273.
- Proculus, Licinius, chosen prefect of the prætorians, vi. 312.
- Princeps senatus, original import and privileges of the, iii. 352. Its signification extended under the emperors, 355.
- Proculus, C. Valerius, thrown into chains by Ariovistus, i. 259 *note*¹. Recovered, 262.
- Proconsuls, their government of the provinces, and enormous patronage, i. 35. The proconsular imperium, its privileges and growth, iii. 346, 347. Payment of the proconsuls under the empire, 407. Office of proconsul at the same period, 407. Independent position of the, vi. 259. Their government, 260.
- Professo, the, defined, iv. 326.
- Properius, his losses by confiscation, iii. 177; iv. 459. His description of the battle of Actium, iii. 254. Patronized by Mæconas, iv. 459. His versification, 460. An unskilful flatterer, 460.
- Property, original Roman law of, ii. 412. Affected by the decisions of the prætors, 413. Gradually modified by the principles of natural reason, 414. Taxes on the succession of property under the empire, iii. 424.
- Proscriptions, the first, decreed by law, i. 31. Those of Sulla, 54. Horror of the Romans of the proscriptions of Sulla, 434. Those of the second triumvirate, iii. 139. Of Domitian, vii. 97, 146.
- Protegenes, the delator, v. 360.
- Province, the Roman possessions so called, i. 33, 197. Its importance, 197. Lands in the Province demanded by the Cimbri and Teutones, 202. Oppression of the Province, 207.
- Provinces, the Roman; Gallia Cisalpina, i. 32. Sicily, 32. Sardinia and Corsica, 32. Spain, the Province, Narbo, and Tolosa, 32. The provinces beyond the Adriatic, 32. Relation of the provincials to Rome, 34. Government of the provinces, 35. Fiscal oppressions of the farmers of the revenues, 36. Wrongs and discontents of the provincials, 36. Breaking out of their discontent in various quarters, 37. Attempts of Lucullus to reform the provincial administration, 44. The Province attacked by the Gaulish chief Drappes, ii. 27. Declines in favour of Cæsar, 162. Municipal institutions in the provinces, iii. 410. Division of the provinces into imperial and senatorial, 410. Organization of the provinces by Augustus, iv. 60. Tiberius's administration, v. 144. Their condition in the time of Nero, vi. 257. Independent position of the proconsuls in the provinces, 259. State of the provinces and attitudes of the legions and their chiefs at the accession of Galba, 296. Revolts in the early part of the reign of Vespasian, 384, *et seq.* Settled tranquillity in the Antonine era, vii. 12. Trajan's architectural works, 204. His vigilance in the administration of the provinces, 206. His journeys through the provinces, 341. Threatened disturbances on the frontiers in the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius, 400. Population of the provinces in the reign of Antoninus Pius, 416. Constant degradation of the character of Roman citizenship in the provinces, 420. Character of the edicts of the prefects, 427. Methods and principles of law procedure, 427. Relations of Roman and native usage, 428. Government of the provinces by senators, 434.
- Ptolemæus Apion, surrenders the Cyrenaica to the Romans, iv. 93.
- Ptolemæus XI., king of Egypt, rebellion of his subjects, i. 310. Applies for the intervention of Rome, 310, 327. Cato's advice to him, 311. Resolution of Gabinus to restore him to his throne, 349. The vacant throne bestowed by the population of Alexandria upon his daughter Berenice, 350. Restored by Gabinus, 352. Puts Berenice to death, 352. Leaves his kingdom under the guardianship of Rome, 243. His revenue, iii. 260.
- Ptolemæus XII., king of Egypt, succeeds with his sister Cleopatra to the throne, ii. 244. Their quarrels, 244. His treachery to Pompeius, 244, 245. Summoned by Cæsar to Alexandria, 255. Kept in custody there, 255. Restored to his subjects by Cæsar, 262. Immediately leads an attack upon Cæsar's position, 262. Defeated and drowned at the battle of the Nile, 263.
- Ptolemæus XIII., visits Rome with his sister Cleopatra, ii. 341. His death, iii. 176.
- Ptolemæus, son of Antonius and Cleopatra, Roman provinces assigned by Antonius to, iii. 226.
- Ptolemæus, son of Juba, king of Mauritania, put to death by the emperor Caligula, v. 353.
- Ptolemæus, Claudius, his great work on geography, vii. 402.
- Ptolemæus, king of Cyprus, deprived of his kingdom, i. 307-309.
- Publicani, or farmers of the public revenue, their oppressions in the provinces, i. 87. Attempts of Lucullus to reform their abuses, 44.
- Publicola, L. Gellius, appointed to the revived office of censor, i. 73.
- Puteoli, visit of Cæsar to Cicero, at, ii. 361.
- Pyrenæes, military road of Pompeius across the, ii. 132.
- Pythodoris, queen of Pontus and the Bosphorus, her abilities, iv. 111. Marries Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, 111.

QUADI, wars of M. Aurelius with the, vii. 464, 466-468.

Quadratus, bishop of Athens, his apology for the Christians received by Hadrian, vii. 369.

Quadratus, prefect of Syria, quells an insurrection in Galilee, vi. 422. His dissensions with Corbulo and dismissal, 424.

Questiones perpetue, institution of the, v. 107.

Quæstors, the, under the empire, iii. 461. Quarries, revenue derived from, iii. 423.

Quæstores, their duties, iii. 371.

"Quinquennium Neronis," the, vi. 85, 93.

Quintilian, perhaps the first schoolmaster who obtained the consular ornaments, vii. 29, 136. His origin, employments, and writings, vii. 225. Compared with Seneca, 225, 226.

Quintilis, the month, its name changed to Julius, iii. 65, 73, 374.

Quirinal hill, the, i. 18. In the time of Augustus, iv. 375.

Quiritary proprietorship, embracing exemption from the land-tax, reluctantly given by the emperors, vii. 418.

RABIRIUS, the senator, prosecution of, i. 107.

Rauraci, the, join the Helvetii, i. 340.

Ravenna, Caesar stations himself at, ii. 78, 89. Importance of in Caesar's time, 89.

Recitation, custom of, at Roman suppers, iv. 450.

Registers, statistical, of the empire, iv. 326-329.

Regi, a British tribe, their dwelling-place, vi. 18. In friendly relation with the Romans, 21, 28.

Regulus, Livineius, defends Cn. Piso, v. 80.

Religion, Roman, its fundamental principle, ix. 17. Its invigoration undertaken by Augustus, 17. Religious functions of the patrician houses, 22. Augustus's restoration of the temples, 24. And of the popular worship of the lares, 25. Varieties of religion in the Roman empire, 302. The vulgar notion of a deity, v. 291. Measures taken by Claudius for the conservation of the national religion, 387. Alliance of philosophy with religion at Rome, vi. 188. Stoics, and Stoicism, ii. 401; vi. 190. The revival of religion under Augustus to a great extent a genuine movement, 193. Position of the Roman religion in relation to the superstitions of Gaul and Syria respectively, 199. Arrival of the time for the appreciation of the idea of the Divine Unity, the essential dogma of Judaism, 203. General religious toleration in Rome under Nero, 228. Stoicism and Christianity, 232.

Remi, a Belgian tribe, their power, i. 266. Taken under Roman protection by Caesar, 268. Their capital Bibracte besieged by the confederate Belgæ, 268. Devote themselves to Roman interests, 297.

Rescripts and constitutions of Augustus, iii. 378.

Revenue, Roman, mode of drawing the, i. 86. Fiscal oppressions, 37. Attempts of Lucullus to reform the abuses of the pub-

lican, 44. Objects of public expenditure under the commonwealth, 46, 417. Under the empire, 418. Sources of revenue: 1. The public domains, 419. 2. The tribute, 420. 3. The capitation, 420. Mode of payment of the pecunia, 421. Revenue derived from mines and quarries, 423. From salt works, fisheries, and forests, 424. Customs and duties, 424. Taxes on the succession of property and enfranchisement of slaves, 424. The public auctions and the emperor's taxes, 425.

Rhinarians, their probable position, iv. 159. Overthrown by Drusus, 160.

Rhinoceros of Rhene joins Pompey in the civil war, ii. 188.

Rhetoricians, Greek, Cicero's character of the habits of the, i. 97. The schools of the rhetoricians in Rome, iv. 462.

Rhene, Eastern chain of fortresses on the, iv. 176. Canal of Drusus from the Rhine to Lake Flevis, 179. Extension of the Roman government between the Rhene and the Elbe, 205. The frontiers of the Roman empire finally bounded by the Rhine, v. 45. Number of legions stationed on the Rhine in the time of Augustus and Tiberius, 142. The emperor camps on the Rhene, and his memoraries there, 347. Trajan's bridge over the Rhine at Mainz, vii. 176. His rampart from the Rhine to the Danube, 177.

Rhodes, martial skill of the people of, ii. 261. Characterised by the reputation, iii. 161. Once mistress of the sea, iv. 167. Remarkable for its poor law, its arsenals, and its schools of philosophy, 197. Deprived of its autonomy, vii. 25.

Roads, military, of Acrida through Gaul, iv. 80. Over the Alps, 89. Roads and rate of travelling by land in the time of Augustus, 321-323. Description of the roads approaching Rome, 328. The Appian way described, 338, 349. The Flaminian Way, 356.

Rome, the city at, local features of its original birthplace, i. 18. Its adaptation as a shelter to crime and rapine, 18. Native ferocity of its inhabitants, 18. Their hatred of foreigners, 19. Struggles between the patricians and plebeians, 21, 22. The contest transferred to the richer and poorer classes, 24. Proprietary enactments: the *Latian rogationes* and agrarian laws of the Gracchi, 25. Concession of the Latin franchise to the Italian allies, 28. Triumph of the popular party at Rome contemporaneous with the enfranchisement of the Italians, 29, 30. Collegial reaction under Sulla, and ascendancy of the exclusive or Roman policy, 31. Combinations of the foes and subjects of Rome against her power, 38. Threatened by Spartacus and his followers, 52. Corruption of the government at home, 52. And venality and violence displayed at the elections, 53. Dissolute character of the mass of the free urban population, 53. Moral superiority of the knights to the senators, 54. Growth of a middle class, 54. Lord rights of the Roman citizen, 55. Claims of the provin-

cials to comprehension, 56. Gradual enlightenment of Roman statesmen, 57. Tendency towards a general fusion of races, 57. Contemporaneous manifestation of Christianity and monarchy, 58. Development of the idea of unity, 58. Revolt of the citizens under L. Saturninus, 107. State of parties in Rome immediately after the conspiracy of Catiline, 126. Origin of the rapid transition of the taste of the citizens from simplicity to luxury, 159, 160. First transaction of the Romans beyond the Alps, 198. Comparison between the Romans and Gauls in a military point of view, 282, 283. View of the city from Tusculum in the time of Cicero, 304. Political nullity of the Roman women and their consequent security in times of revolution, 318. Riots of Clodius and Milo, 322. Pompeius appointed to an extraordinary commission for provisioning the city, 324. Corrupt state of the city in the year u.c. 701, 360. The laws of war as understood by the Romans, 402. Interregnum: the tribunes prevent the election of consuls, 431. Consuls elected in the seventh month of the year, 432, 433. General opinion of the necessity of a dictator, 433. Riot and conflagration in the city on the death of Clodius, 436. Caesar's splendid buildings at Rome, *ii.* 10. Exultation of the people at Caesar's victories, 10, 11. State of parties at Rome during the consulship of M. Claudius Marcellus and S. Sulpicius Rufus, 53. Consternation of the city at Caesar's passage of the Rubicon, 91. The city evacuated by the senate, 94. War against Rome declared by Pompeius, 122. Caesar repairs to Rome in person, 118. And plunders the sacred treasure in the temple of Saturn, 125. Administration of M. Lepidus in the city, 170. Announcement at Rome of the battle of Pharsalia and the death of Pompeius, 209. Celebration of Caesar's four triumphs, 303. Dedication of the Julian forum, 313. Tranquillity of the city during Caesar's absence in Spain, 346. Rumours and anticipations, 355. Arrival of tidings of the victory of Munda, 356. Decrees passed in Caesar's honour, 356. His last triumph, 357. Adoption of the Etruscan institutions by the citizens, 395. Character of the people, 397. The Etruscan discipline gradually supplanted by the civilization of the Greeks, 399. Introduction of free-thinking at Rome, 404. Harmony of free-thinking with the spirit of the age, 404. Fatal influence of Oriental superstitions, 405. Austere principles of the old Roman law of family, 408. Marriage, 409. Parental authority, 410. Original law of property, 412. The beneficial effects of Greek philosophy confined to a small class, 416. Human sacrifices at Rome, 416. Influence of Greek on Roman literature, 417. Roman oratory, 422. Decay of military discipline, 423. Corruption of the generals, 425. Consternation of the citizens on the death of Caesar, *iii.* 7. Occupation of Rome by Caesar's assassins, 9. His gardens beyond the

Tiber bequeathed to the people, 34. Scene in the city at the funeral of Caesar, 36-43. Cesarean outbreaks in the city, and the consul Dolabella's treatment of them, 53, 54. The shows exhibited by Octavius, 63. Exhibition of the Ludi Apollinares by Brutus, 73. Effect produced at Rome by Cicero's second philippic, 99. Horrors produced by the proscription under the second triumvirate, 143. Famine prices in *n.c.* 40, 186. The triumvirs assailed in the Via Sacra, 187. Rejoicings in the city on the termination of the civil wars, 189. Order restored in the city by Octavius, 210. Patrolled for the first time by a nocturnal police, 211. Decorations of Agrippa during his adulescence, 234. State of the city during the absence of Octavius in the East, 311. A census of the Roman people taken by Octavius, 328. The temple of Apollo on the Palatine hill consecrated by him, 330. Building of the Pantheon, 339. Events which led to conferring on Augustus the *potestas consularis*, 365. Legislative and judicial functions of the Roman people under the republic, 376. And under the empire, 386. The people deprived of the election of their magistrates, 388. Importance attached to the due supply of grain to the city, 390. Disastrous policy of free distribution of corn, 391. Functions of the senate under the republic, 392. And of the knights, 397. Position and functions of the executive officers under the empire, 399-412. Establishment of a standing army, 411. The navy of Augustus, 416. Objects of public expenditure under the commonwealth, 417. Under the empire, 418. The public revenue under the commonwealth and under the empire, 417-420. Restoration of the temples of Augustus, *iv.* 24. And of the popular worship of the Lares, 25. Worship of the god Terminus, 27. System of augural limitation and the consecration of boundaries, 28. Marriage among the Romans, 30-40. Regulations of Augustus for the distinction of classes, 41. His restrictions on the manumission of slaves, 42. The prospect of monarchy not discouraging to the Romans, 49. Fondness of the people for the games of the circus, 54. The people felicitate themselves on the signs of general peace and prosperity, 54. Considerations on the source of Roman history at this period, 57. Erection of the mausoleum of Augustus, 132. And of the theatre of Marcellus, 133. State of affairs at Rome during the absence of Augustus in the East, 137. Enthusiasm on the return of Augustus, 138. His Ludi Saeculares, 142. Institution of the prefecture of the city, 145. The history of Rome assumes the character of a domestic drama, 197. The gardens of Mæcenas on the Esquiline hill, 198. The Accursed Field, 199. Consternation at Rome on the outbreak of the Pannonians, Dalmatians, &c., 248. State of affairs in the city at this period, 249. Discontent of the populace manifested in many ways, 249. Good humour restored by the games of

Tiberius, 250. State of popular feeling at the time of the banishment of Ovid, 264. Temple of Concord dedicated by Tiberius, 276. The census of the year 767 (A. D. 14), 282. Rome the emporium of the commerce of the Mediterranean Sea, 313. And the centre of communications by land, 321. Survey of the city, as compared with other cities of the empire, 330, *et seq.* The life of the Romans on the Campanian coast, 363. Approaches to the city, 365. The roads, 365. The aqueducts, 365. Solitude of the country round Rome, 366. Tombs by the roadside, 367. The Via Appia, 367. Entrance into Rome, 369. The seven hills, 369. The Palatine, 370. Its temples and patrician residences, 372-375. The Quirinal, Viminal, and Esquiline hills, 376. The Atrium and Capitolium, 376. The temple of Jupiter Tarpeius, or Capitolinus, 376. The Clivus Asyli and Clivus Capitolinus, 377. The Aventine hill, 378. The Great Circus, 379. The walls of Servius, 379. The valleys of Rome, 380. The Forum Romanum, 380-382. The Argiletum and Subura, 382. The Forum of the Cæsars, 383. The Velabrum, 383. The Forum Boarium, 384. The Transiberine quarter, 384. The Campus Martius, 385. The Pineian hill, 387. The population of the city chiefly clustered in the lower parts of the city, 388. Style of domestic architecture, 389. The temples, 391. The two classes of dwellings—the *domus* and the *insula*, 392. The mansions of the nobles, 392. The cabins of the poorer citizens, 393. Approximate estimate of the population of Rome, 394. 1. From the area of the city, 394. Extent of the suburbs, 396. 2. From the recorded number of houses, 398. 3. From the number of recipients of grain, 399. Exaggeration of ancient and modern authorities on this subject, 401. The circumstances of Rome do not admit of a very large population, 403. Life in Rome, 405. The thronging of the streets, 405. Trades exercised in them, 406. Crowds of loungers and gazers, 407. Interruption to traffic and paucity of thoroughfares, 407. Demolition of houses, 407. Fires, 407. Inundations, 408. Places of recreation for the citizens: Parks and gardens, 409. Theatrical exhibitions, 410. Pantomime, 410. Spectacles, 411. The amphitheatre, 412. The circus, 414. Chariot races, 414. Exhibition of wild beasts, 415. Gladiatorial combats, 416. Sentiments of antiquity on these bloody spectacles, 416. Fondness of the Romans for the bath, and manners in them, 419. The day of a Roman noble, 421. Coarseness of the luxury of the Roman table, 425. Custom of recitation, 428. Habits of declamation, 430. The schools of the rhetoricians, 432. The urban and praetorian guards in the time of Tiberius, v. 143. Suppression of the Egyptian and Jewish rites in Rome by Tiberius, 150. His limitation of the right of asylum, 151. Flagrant dissipation of the times, 152. Despair of Tiberius of checking it by sumptuary

enactments, 153. Shamelessness of both sexes, 154. The praetorian camp established by Sejanus, 174. Its site and dimensions, 174. The emperor Tiberius quits the city, 195. Disastrous occurrence ascribed to his retirement, 200. Conflagration on the Calan hill, 201. Progress of debauchery, 201. Confusion at Rome on the death of Sejanus, 221. No traces of the terrible reign of Tiberius visible among the populace, 235. Rapid succession of executions and confiscations of the emperor Caligula, 264. Criminal conceptions of this emperor's buildings and architectural extravagances, 269. His aqueducts, 269. His imperial palace, 280. His bridge across the Volturnus, 331. The limits of the pomerium extended by Claudius, 377. Public works of Claudius, 394. Measures of this emperor for the amusement of the citizens, 396. Earthquake at Rome in A.D. 500, 449. Failure of the harvest in the provinces, and bread riots in the city, 449. Increasing extravagance of the shows in the time of Nero, vi. 111, 126. His presence at Rome desired by both populace and senate, 126. Infamous debauchery publicly encouraged by him, 127. The great fire at Rome, 128. Rebuilding of the city, 135. Extension of Nero's palace, or golden house, 138. The neighbourhood of Rome ravaged by storms and pestilence, 160. The idea of tyranny familiar to the citizens, 176. The Roman police repressive, not preventive, 178. Freedom of thought among the citizens, 179. System of education independent of priests or magistrates, 180. Literature of the Romans, 184 *et seq.* Alliance of philosophy at Rome with religion and government, 188. Attractiveness of stoicism to the noblest characters at Rome, 192. Position of the religion of Rome in relation to the superstitions of Gaul and Syria respectively, 199. The Syrian worship of the elements attractive to the lower order of women at Rome, 206-207. And at length to the men also, 207. The Jews at Rome, 203. Influence of their religion over the citizens, 203, *et seq.* Spiritual pride of the Jewish freedmen in the city, 209. Reception of Christianity among that class of Jews and their proselytes, 210. Nero's persecution of the Christians, 216, 217. *Young Rome* of the time of Nero, 240. The *lazzaroni* of the city, 256. Governed by Helius during Nero's visit to Greece, 276. Nero's triumphal return, 277. Unearliness of the popular mind at Rome at the forthcoming struggle between Otho and Vitellius, 325. Sensuality and licentiousness of the city in the reign of Vitellius, 365. Attack and defence of the Capitol by the Flavians and Vitellians, 365. And conflagration of the temple, 366. The city stormed by Antonius Primus and the Flavians, 367. And Vitellius slain, 371. Places and honours divided by the Flavians among themselves, 372. Decree of the senate for the restoration of the Capitol, 374. Strong measures of Mucianus in the city, 375. Foundation of the new

- Capitol, 373. Architectural works of the emperor Vespasian, vii. 27. Demolition of Nero's golden house, 24, 33. Erection of the arch of Titus, 33. And of Titus's baths, 33. Erection of the Colosseum, 36. Fire and pestilence at Rome in the reign of Titus, 49. Dedication of the Colosseum, 50. Triumphal and other monuments of Domitian's successes, 91. His equestrian colossus in the Forum, 91, 92. His buildings in Rome, 117. The Cult of Isis and Cybele naturalized, 121. The populace of the city caressed by Domitian, 132. The reign of terror, and last months of this emperor, 149. Trajan's column, 197, 199. His libraries, basilica, and temple, 193. The Ulpian Forum, 201. Other buildings of Trajan in the city, 203. The catacombs, 236 *note*³. Magnificence of the shows of Hadrian, 339. His establishment of the Athenæum, 381. His buildings in the city, 382. The temple of Rome and Venus, 382. The Mausoleum or Moles Hadriani, 382. Buildings of Antoninus Pius, 404. Review of the political elements of Roman society during the reign of Antoninus Pius, 415. The populace of the city, 415. The Antonine column, 474.
- Rome, empire of, effect of the plunder of temples in the civil wars upon the circulation of money throughout the, iii. 316. Reflection of the Romans and their master (Augustus) upon their position towards each other, 321. The public revenue under the empire, 416-424. General tendency of recent events towards monarchy, 425, 429. Character of the sovereignty of Augustus, 429. Harmonious action of the elements of power under the imperial régime, 430. Conception of the Romans of constitutional monarchy, iv. 7. Indifference of the public mind on political questions, 11. Degradation of Roman sentiments by the mixture of races, 12. Expansion of the primitive ideal of Roman life, 15. Signs of material decay, 16. The fundamental principle of the Roman religion still surviving, 17. Its invigoration undertaken by Augustus, 17. The patrician class, its conservation and religious functions, 19-23. Unity of the Roman empire, 292. The three families of nations in the East, West, and North, 294. Their political characteristics contrasted, 295. The Barbarian races of the West, 297. Elements of variety within the Roman empire, 298. i. Varieties of language, 298. Latin the official language of the whole empire, 298. Prevalence of Greek in the eastern provinces, 299. Preponderance of Latin in the Western provinces, 300. ii. Varieties of religion, 302. Their local independence, 303. iii. Distinction of classes, 304. Citizens, subjects, and allies, 304. Slaves, 304. Distinctions of condition in the provinces, 304. Independent communities gradually reduced to subjection, 305-306. Numbers of the citizens, 307. Extension of the franchise by the manumission of slaves, 308. Indirect effect of slavery in combining the various classes of men together, 310. Elements of unity in the Roman empire, 311. Italy the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea the centre of the empire, 392. Rome the emporium of the commerce of the Mediterranean, 313. Staples of commerce in the Mediterranean, 314. Uses of gold and silver among the Romans, 317. Effect of commerce in giving unity to the empire, 318. Security of maritime commerce under the empire, 320. Rome the centre of communications by land, 321. The *orbis pictus*, or map of the empire, iii. 422; iv. 323. Chorographical surveys, 325. The census and the *profectio*, 325. Statistical registers of the empire, 326. The *Breviarium Imperii* of Augustus, 323. Information possessed by the Romans on the subject of population, 329. The Acts, or Journal, of the State, 331. Inquiry into the population of the empire, 332. The population of Italy, 332-339. The population of Italy compared with that of the provinces, 340-342. Ancient and modern population of the Roman dominions compared, 343. A view of the aggregate population advances the idea of unity, 343. The Pax Romana, or idea of universal peace, 344. Troops and fortifications by which this peace was secured, 345. Acquiescence of the subject nations, 346. War of opinion silently generated beneath the surface of the Roman peace, 347. Survey of the great cities of the Roman empire, 349-408. The frontiers of the empire finally bounded by the Rhine, v. 45. Passion of the Romans for accusation, 132. The want under the empire of great and interesting topics for eloquence, 133. Consolidation of the Roman dominion under Tiberius, 139. Who follows the advice of Augustus in not extending the limits of Roman sovereignty, 140. Stations of the legions under Tiberius, 142. Question of the succession to the empire in the latter years of Tiberius, 246. Death of Tiberius, 253. General state of peace and security in the provinces during his reign, 265, *et seq.* Philo's testimony to this fact, quoted, 296. Extravagant luxury of the table in the time of the emperor Caligula, 336. Population of the Roman empire in A.D. 500, 356. Influence of women in the government for the first time, 398. General purity and terseness of style of the Augustan writers, iv. 435. Titus Livius, 436. Virgil, 439. Horace, 449, 452. Attempts of Augustus to correct the deterioration of manners among his courtiers, 450. Propertius, 458. Tibullus, 460. Ovid, 462. The authority of the emperor and senate over matters of national usage, v. 441. State of patrician education at the beginning of the Christian era, vi. 56. Nero's proposal to abolish the *vectigalia* considered, 87, *et seq.* Melancholy reflections of Tacitus on his task as a historian, 160. Education of the Romans under the empire, 181, 182. The government of Nero supported by the voluptuousness and cruelty of the age, 225. Reflections on the depraved morality of the age, 226. Counter-

acting, principles of virtue, 227. Condition of the Roman senate under the Claudian Caesars, 252. Impoverishment of the old families at this period, 254. But general increase of wealth in the upper classes, 254. The community divided into two classes: 1. The clients of the old nobility, 255. 2. The patronless proletarians; the *lazzaroni* of ancient Rome, 255. Condition of the provincials, 257. Preparations of Otho and Vitellius for civil war, 323. Character of the Flavian or Antonine period of Roman history, vii. 7. The period deficient in records, 9. The temple of Janus shut by Vespasian, 10. Tranquillity of the provinces, 12. Attitude of the German tribes towards Rome, 80. Three groups of barbarians on the northern frontier, on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Ister, 81, 82. Internal history of Domitian's administration, 98. A decline of wealth perceptible in Italy, 118. Trajan's vigilance in the administration of the provinces, 206. Prevalence of suicide in the time of Trajan, vii. 255. Voluptuousness and coarseness of the period, 260. The tone of society corrupted by the soldiery, 261. Magnificence of the dwellings of the nobles, 267. Principle of decorating the exterior of Roman temples, but the interior of their dwellings, 267. Considerations on the taste of the Romans in building, 271. Decline of energy and disappearance of salient features of character among the Romans, 273. Exceptional manliness of Trajan, Agricola, and others, 274. General expectation of a deliverer favoured by Augustus and Vespasian, 279. Perils of the empire and question of the succession at the death of Trajan, 312, 328. The great geographical work of Claudius Ptolemaeus, 402. The itinerary of Antoninus, 402. Review of the epoch of Antonine Plus, 418-450. Population of the provinces in this reign, 416. Extension of the Roman franchise, 417-421. Progress of the empire towards uniformity, 423, *et seq.* Decline of public spirit in the empire coincident with the perfection of jurisprudence, 430. Disturbances on the frontiers in the reign of M. Aurelius, 453. Inroads of the barbarians along the whole Danubian frontier, 460. The empire depopulated by the *pestis Antonicina*, 461-463. Comparative strength of the barbarians and the empire at the death of M. Aurelius, 477. Symptoms of decline of the empire, 479. Contraction of monetary transactions from the diminution of the circulating medium, 479. Decrease in the population, and substitution of slave for free labour, 480. Effects of vice flowing from the institution of slavery, 481. Limits of material improvement in ancient civilization, 483. The decline of Roman civilization dates from before the republic, 484. Disastrous effects of the pestilence and other national disturbances, 486. Desperate expedients for resisting the attacks of the barbarians, 487. Revival of superstitious observances, 487. Persecution of the Christians, 488.

Reaction in favour of positive belief, 491. General hopelessness of society at this period, 494.

Roxolani, aggressions of the, in Dacia, vii. 325. Hadrian takes the field against them, 325. Induced to retire within their own lines, 326.

Rubellius Plautus, great-great-grandson of Augustus, pretended conspiracy to raise him to the throne, vi. 79. Put to death by Nero, 129.

Rudion, the, ii. 89. Crossed by Caesar, 91.

Rufus, put to death by Nero, vi. 273.

Rullus, Servilius, the tribune, his agrarian law, i. 109.

Rusino, a Gallic city, colonised by the Romans, i. 208.

Rutupia, or Richborough, Caesar's camp at, i. 3-6.

SABAZIUS, oracle of, iii. 60.

Sabina, wife of Hadrian, vii. 326. On ill terms with him, but accompanies him on his journeys, 330. The prefect Clarus and the secretary Suetonius degraded for disrespect to her, 350. Visits Thebes, 377. Her death, 385.

Sabinus, Cornelius, his pretensions to the empire, vi. 295.

Sabinus, Flavius, Vespasian's elder brother, nominated warden of the city, vi. 342. Sends his cohorts to his brother's camp, 348. Leader of the Flavian party at Rome, 364. Takes refuge in the Capitol, 364. Slain, 367.

Sabinus, Flavius, cousin of Domitian, proscribed by the emperor, vii. 147.

Sabinus, Julius, joins a conspiracy to liberate Gaul, vi. 400. Defeated by the Sequani, 402. His pathetic story, 412.

Sabinus, Nymphidius, prefect of the praetorians, induces them to abandon Nero, vi. 285. Destroyed by them for attempting to seize the empire, 294.

Sabinus, Oppius, the praetor, slain by the Danians, v. 88.

Sabinus, Q. Titinius, serves under Caesar in Gaul, i. 264, 291. Defeats the Ucelli, 294.

Attacked by the Eburones, 302. Killed by them, 305.

Sabinus, one of the assassins of Caligula, commits suicide, v. 369.

Sabinus, the prefect, declares for Vitellius, vi. 339.

Sabura, Julia's general, charged with the defence of Ciria, ii. 293. Routed and slain by Sittas, 296.

Sacrifices, human, in Rome, ii. 416.

Sacervir, Julius, the Druid warrior, heads a revolt of the Ebori, v. 168. His defeat and death, 170.

Sadala of Thrace, joins Pompeius in the civil war, ii. 153.

Sadducees, their origin, opinions, and politics, iii. 296-298. Support John Hyrcanus, 298.

Santa lex, for raising plebeian families to the patriciate, iv. 22.

Salary, origin of the term, iii. 405. Official payment of salaries under the empire, 405.

Salassi, war of Octavius against the, iii. 232.

- Their dwelling-place, iv. 87. Varro's treachery and destruction of the whole tribe, 89.
 Sallustius, the historian, his quarrel with Milo, ii. 44. Proscribed by the censor Appius Claudius, 78. His pungent satires, 74. Restored to the senate by Caesar, 280. Repulsed by the mutinous soldiers in Campania, 252. Appointed proconsul of Numidia, 304.
 Salluvii, territory of the, taken by the Romans, i. 196.
 Salt-works, revenue derived from, iii. 423.
 Salvianus, banished by Tiberius, v. 184.
 Salvidienus placed in command of a fleet by Octavius, iii. 161. Defeated by Sextus Pompeius, 161. Recalled from Spain by Octavius, 179.
 Salvius, the tribune, murdered, iii. 148.
 Salyi, wars of Fulvius Flaccus against the, i. 196.
 Samarobriua (Amiens), a city of the Belgæ, i. 226. Assembly of Gaulish tribes at, 390. Cæsar at, 391, 396.
 Sameas, or Shammal, his remark respecting the career of Herod the Great, iii. 302.
 Samnites, the, defeated at Sentinum, i. 191.
 Samnium admitted to the Latin franchise, i. 24.
 Samos seized by the Cilician pirates, i. 48. Deprived of its autonomy by Vespasian, vii. 23.
 Samosata, capital of Commagene, besieged by Ventidius, iii. 192.
 Santones, a Gallic tribe, i. 215.
 Saragossa, the ancient Cæsar-Augusta, iv. 65.
 Sardinia, supply of grain from, to Rome, i. 83. The government of, entrusted to Cotta, ii. 86. Declares for Cæsar, 121. State of the island in the time of Augustus, iv. 123. Its population at the commencement of the empire, 340. Four thousand Jews banished from Rome to Sardinia by Tiberius, v. 150.
 Sarmatians, triumph of M. Aurelius over the, vii. 473. Renewal of the war, 474.
 Saserna, his contribution towards the expense of the shows in honor of Cæsar, iii. 63.
 Satala, on the Lyens, occupied by Trajan, vii. 303, 304.
 Satrius Secundus reveals to Antonia the conspiracy of Sejanus, v. 228.
 Saturn, temple of, in the Capitol, the treasury of Rome plundered by Cæsar, ii. 124.
 Saturninus, C. Sestius, elected consul, iii. 308. Suppresses a riot in the city, iv. 137. Joins Tiberius against the Marcomanni, 245.
 Saturninus, L., heads a revolt in Rome, i. 106. Killed, 107.
 Saturninus, L. Antonius. *See* Antonius Saturninus.
 Sauromatæ, submission of the, to Trajan, vii. 303.
 Seneca, the slave, kills L. Saturninus, i. 107.
 Senecius, conspires with Piso against Nero, iv. 147. Discloses the plot, 149.
 Senecola, Mucius, his answer to Sulpicius, iv. 43.
 Senecola, Q., tribune, i. 361. Stops the elections for consuls by his intervention, 361.
 Scantinian law, enforced by Domitian, vii. 107.
 Scaptius, agent of M. Brutus in Cyprus, his cruelty at Salamis, i. 313.
 Scapula, commands the republican insurgents in Spain, ii. 305.
 Scaurus, Æmilius, defeated and taken prisoner by the Cimbri and Teutones, i. 202. A candidate for the consulship, 360. Appointed *princeps* of the senate, iii. 353.
 Scaurus, M., taken prisoner at Actium, but pardoned, iii. 258.
 Scipio, Q. Cæcilius Metellus, his daughter Cornelia married to Cn. Pompeius, ii. 47. Associated with Pompeius in the consulship, 47. Restores the authority of the censors, 50. Commands for Pompeius in Macedonia, 211. Advances with his legions from Syria into Macedonia, 214. Plunders the temple of Ephesus on his way, 215. Compelled by the Cæsarians to entrench himself, 216. Shares the honour of the chief command with Pompeius, 225. Aspires to the office of Pontifex Maximus, 225. Commands the centre at Pharsalia, 230. Becomes the leader of the Pompeians after the death of Pompeius, 251. Sails from Patrae for Africa, 252. Joins Varus and Juba there, 238. His dispute with Varus at Utica, 286. Has the chief command of the republican army, 287. Worsted by Cæsar at Uzita, 293. Completely defeated by Cæsar at Thapsus, 295. His death, 297, 310.
 Scodra, in Illyricum, made the boundary between the dominions of Octavius and Antonius, iii. 185.
 Scribonia, sister of Libo, married to Octavius, iii. 183. Divorced, 218. Accompanies her daughter Julia in exile, iv. 211.
 Scribonianus, Furius Camillus, conspires with others against the life of Claudius, v. 409. Banished by Claudius, 449.
 Scythed chariots used by the Belgæ, i. 226. And by the Britons, 376.
 Sea-fights exhibited by Claudius on the Lake Fucinus, v. 395.
 Sebaste, the Cappadocian, founded by king Archelaus, iv. 112.
 Sebaste, in Palestine, visited by Agrippa, iv. 163.
 Seduni, their territory occupied by S. Galba, i. 286.
 Segestes, chief of the Cherusicans, enrolls himself in the Roman service, and warns Varus against Arminius, iv. 271, 272. Besieged by Arminius, v. 82.
 Segimerus, father of Arminius, enrolls himself in the Roman service, iv. 271.
 Segni, a Belgic people, i. 225. Submit to Cæsar, 400.
 Segontiaci, a British tribe, submit to Cæsar, i. 388.
 Sejanus, L. Ælius, his origin and early history, v. 94. Appointed prefect of the prætorian guards, 94. His birth and talents inspire no jealousy in Tiberius, 164. His ambition and intrigues, 172. Establishes the prætorian camp, 173. His machinations against Drusus, 175. Seduces Livilla, wife of Drusus, and poisons him, 176. His enmity to Agrippina and the

- children of Germanicus, 179. His evil influence on Tiberius, 180. Demands the hand of Livilla of Tiberius, who rejects his suit, 186-188. His renewed intrigues, 189. Plots the ruin of Agrippina, her family, and friends, 189, 190, 192, 201. Saves the life of Tiberius, and obtains renewed favour, 202. Homage paid Seneca by all classes of the citizens, 203. His arrogance, 210. Procures the banishment of Agrippina and her son Nero, and the disgrace of Drusus, 216. Affiliated to Livilla, and advances to the consulship, 219. The senate confers on him jointly with Tiberius the consulate for five years, 221. Decline of his influence, 221, 222. The emperor refuses to see Seneca, who conceals measures against Tiberius's life, 222. His designs discovered by Antonia, 223. Circumvented by Tiberius, arrested by Macro, and put to death, 225, 226. Fall of his family, kinsmen, and friends with him, 227. Proscription of his children and friends, 229. Apicata, his divorced wife, discloses to Tiberius the circumstances of the poisoning of Drusus, 231. Massacre of his proscribed friends, 233.
- Seleucia**, the Parthian court established at, i. 403. Reduced by Trajan, vii. 306, 307.
- Seleucus**, a seion of the Syrian dynasty, married to Berenice, queen of Egypt, i. 351. Strangled by his wife, 351.
- Senate**, the *judicia* restored to the, by Sulla, i. 32. Constitutional functions of the senate under the republic, iii. 392. Under Augustus, 393. Method of transacting business in the senate, 394. Distinction of the senators, 395. Claims of the senate to elect the emperors, 396. Tiberius in the senate, v. 17. All the functions of empire left by tacit understanding in the hands of Tiberius, 17. Powers of the senate in election, legislation, and criminal jurisdiction, 99-105. The emperor's control over the senate through the powers of the censorship, 113. Petition of a pauper senator rejected by Tiberius, 113. His control over the senate by the law of majestas, 113. His show of deference to the senate, 158. His will annulled by the senate, 235. Its obsequiousness to the emperor Calus, 360. Its deliberations on the death of Calus, 365. Yields to the claims of Claudius, and accepts him as emperor, 366. Claudius maintains the dignity of the order, 382. Vacancies supplied from wealthy provincial families, and especially from the Gaulish nobles, 383, 384. Authority of the senate in matters of national usage, 441. Vows and sacrifices decreed by it for all kinds of atrocities in the reign of Nero, vi. 124. Its base adulation, 151. The senate the idol of Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, 387. Nero's proscriptions, 252. Its numbers reduced under the tyranny of the Claudian Cæsars, 252. Its estimation lowered in the eyes of the citizens, 253. Deceives Nero a public enemy, and sanctions the election of Galba, 291-298. Accepts the adoption of Piso by Galba with satisfaction, 301. Suspected by Otho's soldiers of treachery, 327. Accepts Vitellius as emperor, 329. Revised by Vespasian, vii. 21. Domitian's proscription of the best and wisest of the senators, 146. Trajan's measures for maintaining the dignity of the order, 312. Courtied by Hadrian, 337. Review of its position during the Flavian era, 451. Circumstances which gave a show of importance to it at this time, 451. Inferior magistrates only elected by it, 432. Government of the provinces by senators, 434. Their usages and traditions maintained by their pride, 455. Their triumphs over the freedmen, 456. Their favours bestowed upon the emperors, who provide them with comports and pleasures, 458. Deference of M. Aurelius to the senate, 458.
- Seneca**, M. Annæus, the rhetorician, his "*Suasorie*" and "*Controversie*," iv. 433. His sons, vi. 162.
- Seneca**, L. Annaeus, the philosopher, condemned by Calus, but saved by a friend, v. 342. Banished by Claudius, 497. Recalled from exile, and appointed tutor to Nero, 442. Honours Claudius in his lifetime as a deity, 460. His "*Consolatio ad Polybium*," 461. His satire on the deification of Claudius, 463. His extravagant flattery of Nero, 466. One of the immediate causes of an insurrection in Britain, vi. 43. Principles of education adopted by him for Nero, 58. Composes the funeral oration of Claudius, 65. Opposes Agrippina, 68. His influence over Nero, 70. Grounds for imputing the murder of Britannicus to his advice, 77. Strives to make Nero popular with the senate, 77. Disliked by Tacitus, 82. He and Barbus authors of the "*Quinquagesimum Neronis*," 85. Accused of counselling Nero to murder his mother, 100. His conduct on Agrippina's death, 102-105. His philosophy alien from Roman sentiments, 112. Death of his colleague Burrhus, 118. Attempts to withdraw from public life, 118. His wealth, 43, 118. Tempts Nero, 125. Charge of conspiracy against him rebutted, 125. Again attempts to withdraw into privacy, 142. Said to have been connected with Piso's conspiracy, and put to death in consequence, 146, 150. Manner of his death, 150. His political and moral teaching, 230, 231. Agreement between his writings and those of St. Paul, 231. Inconsistency between his teaching and his conduct, 292. Compared and contrasted with Quintilian, vii. 225.
- Senecio**, hunted to death, vii. 147.
- Senones**, the, defeated at the battle of the Vandimonian lake, i. 191. Their personal appearance, 228. Refuse obedience to Rome, 399. Two legions left by Cæsar in their country, 405.
- Sentium**, battle of, i. 191.
- Sentius**, Cælius, chosen proconsul of Syria, v. 70. Compels Piso to quit Syria for Rome, 73.
- Septicius Clarus**, prætorian prefect, disgraced by Hadrian, vii. 350.
- Septimius**, murders his old comrade Pompeius, ii. 245, 246.

- Segunani, a Gallic tribe, their territory, i. 214. Complain to Rome of the tyranny of the Ædui, 233. Invite the Suevi to their assistance, throw off the yoke of the Ædui, and assume the leadership of the Gallic tribes, 233, 234. Oppressed by the Suevi, 237. Induced to allow the Helvetii to pass through their territory, 245. Their condition after Cæsar's first campaign in Gaul, 266. Establishment of Roman influence over them, 266. Defeat the Lingones under Julius Sabinus, vi. 402.
- Serapis, worship of, at Alexandria, vi. 381.
- Serenus, his punishment for seditious intrigues, v. 184.
- Sertorius, history of, i. 83. Insurrection of the Spanish provinces under him, 88. His defeat and flight, 39. Succeeds in a new revolt against Rome, 39. Rejects the proffered alliance of Mithridates, 40. His contest with Cn. Pompeius, 40. His influence over the Iberians, 41. His milk-white hind, 41. His death, 42.
- Servæus, a friend of Germanicus, takes part in the prosecution of Cn. Piso, v. 82.
- Servian walls of Rome, i. 18. Described, iv. 379.
- Servilia, mother of M. Junius Brutus, her character, i. 311. Her bold counsel to the liberators, iii. 70, 72.
- Servilia, daughter of Soranus, charges brought against her, vi. 171. Sentenced to death, 172.
- Servilius Isauricus, his unsuccessful attempts to reduce the Cilician pirates, i. 48. An unsuccessful candidate for the office of Pontifex Maximus, 113. Elected consul with Cæsar, ii. 184. His vigilance, 269. Proposed for Dolabella's successor in Syria, iii. 111. Moves a thanksgiving for the victory of Mutina, 120. Becomes consul a second time, 178. Refuses to join Antonius, 178.
- Servius, mound of, in Rome, i. 18.
- Sestius, L., appointed consul by Augustus, iii. 341.
- Sestius, P., Cilicia placed under his control, ii. 86.
- Severianus, prefect of Cappadocia, slain with the loss of a legion, vii. 475.
- Severus, A. Cæcina. *See* Cæcina.
- Severus, Cassius, offends Augustus by his licentious writings, v. 122.
- Severus, Catillus, appointed prefect of Syria, vii. 341.
- Severus, Julius, his tactics against the Jews in Palestine, vii. 318.
- Sextilia, mother of Vitellius, her noble character, vi. 342. Dies soon after he is declared emperor, 342. Improbable stories about her death, 343.
- Sextilius, the month, its name changed to Augustus, iii. 375; iv. 130.
- Shammal, his prediction respecting Herod the Great, iii. 302.
- Sibylla Cinnama, alleged oracle of, forbidding an armed intervention in Egypt, 1328.
- Sibylline books, officers charged with the custody of the, iii. 371. Purged and the spurious books burnt by Augustus, 373.
- Sicari, or secret assassins, of the Zenote, in Jerusalem, vi. 425.
- Sicily, importance of, to Rome, i. 32. Government of, entrusted to M. Porcius Cato, ii. 86. Who surrenders it to the Cæsarians without a blow, 121, 122. Seized by Sextus Pompeius, iii. 160. Population of, at the commencement of the Roman empire, iv. 340. Visited by Hadrian, vii. 352.
- Sigambri, a German tribe, utterly extinguished, vi. 38.
- Silanus, Appius, his noble family and connections, v. 408. Incurs the hatred of Messalina and is put to death, 408.
- Silanus, D. Junius, elected consul, i. 138. Defeated by the hordes of the Cimbri and Teutones, 202.
- Silanus, Decimus, paramour of the younger Julia, v. 236 *note* 1.
- Silanus, Lucius, son of Appius Silanus, betrothed to Octavia, daughter of the emperor Claudius, v. 433. Disgraced by a conspiracy formed by Agrippina, 439. Commits suicide, 442.
- Silanus, M. Junius, proconsul of Asia, keeps Vonones, king of Parthia, in custody, v. 52. Removed from his proconsulship by Tiberius, 59. Found guilty of extortion and banished, 128. His daughter married to Caius Cæsar, 286. Put to death by Caius, 308.
- Silanus, M. Junius, nicknamed "the golden sheep" by Caligula, vi. 63. Poisoned by Agrippina's command, 68.
- Silanus, L., proscribed by Nero, vi. 157. Slain at Barium, 158.
- Sillua, C., restrains his divisions on the Rhine from open mutiny, v. 22. Makes a demonstration against the Chatti, 37. Crushes a revolt in Gaul, 169. Charged with treason, he commits suicide, 181. His image disgraced by Tiberius, 433.
- Silius, C., advocates the reinforcement of the Lex Cincia, v. 420. His intrigue and marriage with Messalina, 425-427, 432. His fate and that of his accomplices, 434.
- Silius Italicus, consul at the usurpation of Galba, vi. 293. His character and writings compared with those of Lucan, vii. 222. Cause of his suicide, 257.
- Silius, P., his adventures, ii. 289. In the service of Bocchus, king of Mauretania, 289. Advances upon Ciria, the capital of Numidia, 292. Rout and slays Sabura, 296. Captures Afranius and Faustus Sulla, 302.
- Silius, P., succeeds to the consulship, iii. 363. Defeats the Communi Vennonnes, Noricans, and Pannonians, iv. 160. Hands over his command to Drusus, 160.
- Silk, cost of, in Rome, ii. 813.
- Silphium, the gum, annual tribute of, from the Cyrenæica, iv. 98.
- Silures, a people of South Wales, attacked by Ostorius Scapula, vi. 29, 35. Overthrown, 36, *et seq.* Defeat the Romans, 39.
- Silver, uses of, among the Greeks and Romans, iv. 317.
- Smiths, prætorian prefect under Hadrian, vii. 331.
- Simon, son of Giora, heads a revolt in Jerusalem, vi. 427. Defeats Cestius at the

- gates, 427. A chief of the zealots, 429. His position in the defence of the city, during the great siege, 449, 450. Takes refuge underground, 467, 469. His fate, 470.
- Sinjar, great desert of, l. 422.
- Simpe, in the time of Augustus, iv. 360.
- Sirmium, Roman post of, attacked by the Pannonians, iv. 247.
- Sisenna, son of Gabinus, his incapacity in Syria, l. 352.
- Slaves and slavery in Rome, l. 389. Caesar's attempts to counteract the increase of slavery, ii. 829. Octavius's treatment of slaves taken with arms in their hands, iii. 207. Taxes on the sale and enfranchisement of slaves, iii. 424. Restrictions of Augustus on manumission, iv. 42. Extension of the franchise by manumission, 308. Effects of manumission on the civic franchise, 308-311. Results flowing from the institution of slavery, vii. 480-482.
- Smyrna, the honour of making Tiberius its tutelary deity granted to, v. 194.
- Sohemus, king of Iturea, supports Vespasian, vi. 350.
- Soldarii, or personal servants of kings of Gaul, l. 295.
- Soll, the name of, changed to Pompelopolis, l. 48.
- Soothsayers expelled from Italy by Tiberius, v. 149.
- Sophists in Athens in the time of Hadrian, vii. 861. Character of their teaching, 862. Celebrated sophists, 363, *et seq.*
- Soranus, Barea, charged with treason to Nero, vi. 166, 169, 171. His daughter Servilia included in the prosecution, 171. Both sentenced to death, 172.
- Sosigenes, assists Caesar in reforming the calendar, ii. 333.
- Sosius, C., prefect of Syria, an officer of Antonius, his military exploits, iii. 219. Becomes consul, and pronounces a vehement invective against Octavius, 238. Abandons Rome, and repairs to Antonius, 240. His unsuccessful attack on Agrippa's galleys, 249. Taken prisoner at Actium, but pardoned, 258. Takes Jerusalem, 305.
- Sotiates, a tribe of Aquitani, defeated by P. Crassus, i. 295.
- Spain, the first province acquired by the Romans beyond their own seas, i. 33. Insurrection of the Spanish provinces under Sertorius, 88. The government of Further Spain assumed by Caesar, 133. State of the Roman provinces in Spain at this period, 155. Origin of the name Spain, 164 *note* 1. And of its Iberian inhabitants, 212. Metellus Nepos chosen for the government of Spain, 328. Spain more Romanized than any other province, ii. 118. The Pompeian lieutenants in Spain, Varro, Afranius, and Petreius, 130, 131. Extortions of the Casarian lieutenant Q. Cassius Longinus, 267. Revival of the republican cause in Spain, 265. Continuation of irregular warfare in Spain, iv. 60. Mineral wealth of the province, 61. The Spanish era, 62 *note* 1. Endeavours of Statilius Taurus to quell the hostilities of the Iberians, 63. Augustus proceeds to take the field in person, 62. Reduction of the mountain tribes and foundation of military colonies, 64. Prolonged residence of Augustus in Spain, 65. Renewed outbreaks and final subjugation of the Spaniards by Agrippa, 66. Political organization of the Iberian provinces, 69. Population of Spain at the time of Augustus, 341. Number of legions stationed in Spain in the time of Tiberius, v. 142. Latin rights granted to Spain by Vespasian, vii. 23. The province visited by Hadrian, 350.
- Sparta, favoured by Augustus for its loyalty, iv. 163. Its condition in his time, 354.
- Spartacus, revolt of the gladiators under, l. 50. Defeated and slain, 52.
- Spartianus, his character as a biographer, vii. 301.
- Spices, &c., from the East, ancient trade in, in the Mediterranean, iv. 315.
- Sporaces, phylarch of Anthemusia, submits to Trajan, vii. 304.
- Spurinna, Vestricius, holds Placentia for Otho against the Vitellians, vi. 302. Spurinna as an example of the more refined and intelligent among the Roman nobles, vii. 262.
- Stasanor, the Parthian chieftain, l. 408.
- Statilius Corvinus, his abortive attempt against the life of Claudius, v. 411 *note* 2.
- Statilius Taurus, commands the Casarian fleet in the war against Sextus Pompeius, iii. 163. Appointed proconsul of Africa, 208. Gains a victory over the cavalry of Antonius at Actium, 249. Appointed prefect of Rome, 403; iv. 146. Legatus of Augustus in Spain, 62. Endeavours to quell the hostilities of the Iberians, 62.
- Statilius Taurus, proconsul of Africa, charged by Agrippa with the practice of magic, v. 451. Commits suicide, 452.
- Statius, patronized by Domitian, vii. 136. His works examined and compared with Ovid, vii. 228-231.
- Statius Priscus, prefect in Britain, refuses the offer of the imperial purple, vii. 453. Replaced by Calpurnius Agricola, 454. In Cappadocia, 456. Takes Artaxata, 456.
- Stephanus, freedman of Clemens, slays Domitian, vii. 154.
- Stoics, fatal influence of their philosophy upon the principles of faith and morals, ii. 401. Account of the principles of the Stoics, vi. 190. The attitude of opposition to government first assumed by the Stoics under the empire, 190. Principles on which Stoicism is to be judged, 191. Stoicism attractive to the noblest characters in Rome, 192. The charge against it of contamination and seditiousness not well grounded, 193. Political innocence of its professors, 194. The Stoics "enveloped, as it were, in the atmosphere of Christianity," 233. Aulus Persius, a teacher of Stoicism, 233. The Stoics banished from Rome, vii. 32. Character of the Stoics in the time of Trajan, 254. Suicide not a principle of the Stoics, 255.
- Stonehenge not mentioned by Roman writers, vi. 10 *note* 1.
- Strado, his account of the Gauls, i. 211. Accompanies Petronius to Syene, iv. 103.
- Streets of Rome, in the time of Augustus,

- iv. 405. Trades exercised in them, 406. Crowds of loungers and gazers, 407. Interruptions to traffic, 407. Paucity of streets in Rome, 407.
- Street-games, festival of the, combined with the worship of Augustus, iv. 26.
- Suburra, the, at Rome, character of its population, iv. 898.
- Suevi, their menacing attitude on the right bank of the Rhine, i. 232. Invited by the Sequani to pass into Gaul, 233. Oppress them and the Edui, 237, 254. Defeated by Cæsar and expelled from Gaul, 260-262. Drive the Menapii from their territories, 366. Cross the Rhine into Gaul, 366. Testimony of the Uspetes to their valour, 368. Their encroachments on the territory of the Ubii, 368. Pursued by Cæsar to the Hercynian forests, 399.
- Successiones, a Belgic tribe, head a confederacy of tribes against the Roman invaders, i. 267. Reduced by Cæsar, 270; ii. 36.
- Suetonius Lenis, father of the historian, serves under Otho, vi. 383 *note* 1.
- Suetonius, C. Tranquillus, his "Lives of the Cæsars" characterized, vii. 242, 243. Supply the place of history, 242. Reasons for their preservation, 242. Disgraced by Hadrian for his disrespect to the empress, 350.
- Suetonius Paullinus, the first Roman who crossed the Atlas, v. 873. Routs the Britons in Anglesey, vi. 42. Defeats the Icenii, is recalled, 46-51.
- Suetonius, commands part of Otho's army, vi. 329. At the battle of Bedriacum, 334.
- Suicide, prevalence of, at Rome in the time of Trajan, vii. 255. Among women, 258. Not the result of speculative opinions, nor practised as an escape from tyranny, 256-260.
- Sullius, a delator, employed by Messalina to accuse Valerius Asiaticus, v. 416. His success as an informer, 419. Defends the practice of fees to delators, 420.
- Sulla, Cornelius, the first to decree a proscription by law, i. 81 *note*. Oligarchical reaction under him, 81. Effects of his retirement on the provincials, 87. His victories in Macedonia and Asia Minor, 44. His massacres and proscription, 54. His legislation in the interest of the oligarchy, 59. His death, 61. Fixes the number of the senate at six hundred, 62. Divines the character of Cn. Pompeius, and distrusts him, 69. Requires C. Julius Cæsar to divorce his wife Cornelia, 93. Warns his partisans against Cæsar, 94. His resignation of the dictatorship in 675 and death leave the oligarchy without any acknowledged leader, 61. His system of government a political anachronism, iv. 9.
- Sulla, Faustus, son of the dictator, his wealth, i. 110. Retreats before Cæsar, ii. 102. At Patra with the defeated Pompeians, 283. His death, 302, 303.
- Sulla, Faustus Cornelius, husband of Antonia, and son-in-law of Claudius, chosen consul, v. 221. Put to death by Nero, vi. 61, 120.
- Sulpicius Rufus, Servius, the jurist, an unsuccessful candidate for the consulship, i. 183. Prosecutes Murena for bribery, 183. Elected consul, ii. 51. Abets the presumption of Juba, king of Numidia, 168. Sent as a commissioner to negotiate with Antonius, iii. 104. His death on his journey, 106. His vast legal knowledge and works, iv. 44.
- Sumptuary laws, enactment of, during the consulship of Pompeius and Crassus, i. 346. Cæsar's sumptuary laws, ii. 324.
- Superstitions, oriental, introduced into Rome, ii. 405. Proscribed, but continue to reappear, 407.
- Supper, a Roman, described, iv. 428. Coarseness of the luxury of the Roman table, 425. The ordering of a Roman supper, 425. Custom of recitation at supper, 428.
- Sura, Licinius, conspires against Trajan, vii. 213.
- Sura, Palfurius, struck off the roll of the senate, but restored, vii. 130.
- Surenas, the Parthian general, the word probably a title, not a personal name, description of, i. 409 *note* 1; 421 *note* 1. His position in the state, 421. Besieges Carrhæ; his stratagem to engage Crassus in conference, 427. Seizes the proconsul and his staff, 426. Sends the head and hand of Crassus to Orodes, 428. His mock triumph, 428.
- Surveys of the empire, iv. 325.
- Syene, garrison of Romans at, iii. 280.
- Syllæus, minister of the Nabathæan king Obodas, conducts the expedition of Ælius Gallus into Arabia, iv. 97. Charged with treachery, 97, 99.
- Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, martyrdom of, vii. 294 *note* 2.
- Synnada, condition of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 860.
- Syracense, Roman colony planted by Augustus in, iv. 103.
- Syria, government of, coveted by the consuls, i. 85. The kingdom reduced to a Roman province by Pompeius, 188; iv. 112. The proconsulate assigned by P. Clodius to Gabinus, i. 305. Who is succeeded by Crassus, 358. Extent of the province of Syria at this period, 411. Power of Cassius in the province, iii. 159. Exactions of Antonius, 178. Organization of the province by Augustus, iv. 112. Legions stationed in Syria in the reign of Tiberius, v. 142. The Syrian elemental worship attractive to the lower orders of women in Rome, vi. 199-202. List of the proconsuls in Syria, 261. Character of its governors and of their government, 262, 263. Annexation of Judea to the province of Syria, 264. The command in Syria assumed by the emperor Verus, vii. 454. Reverses sustained by him, followed by splendid victories, 456.
- T**ABULARIUM of Rome, i. 136 *note* 2.
- Tacfarinus, the African warrior, sketch of his career, v. 56. Defeated by Furius Camillus, 57. Renews his incursions into the borders of the African province, 166. Defeated and commits suicide, 185.

- Tacitus, his review of the position of Octavius after the close of the civil wars, iii. 310. His pictures of Teutonic freedom, v. 45, 46. His "Histories" more to be relied on than his "Annals," vi. 372. Misappreciates the sources of Jewish history, 439. Patronized by Domitian, vii. 136. Compared with Livy and Lucan, 233. His reason for fixing the limits of his history considered, 235. His prepossession in favour of Trajan, 237. Certain characteristics of his unfairness to the earlier Caesars, 238. His satirical misrepresentation of his own times, 240. His writings biographical rather than historical, 241. His manliness, 273. Comparison between him and Juvenal, 274. Increase of bitterness with his years, 275.
- Taranis, the Gallic Jupiter, i. 223. Identified with Jove the Thunderer, iv. 84.
- Tarcondimotus I., a Cilician chieftain, joins the Pompeians in the civil war, ii. 188. Slain at Actium, iv. 109. Holds the Cilician and Syrian gates, 109.
- Tarcondimotus II., placed on the throne of Cilicia by Augustus, iv. 109.
- Tarentum, treaty of, between Octavius and Antonius, iii. 197.
- Tarichea, stormed by Vespasian, vi. 437. His atrocity there, 437.
- Tarsus, city of, subdued by Cassius, iii. 150.
- Tarracon, temple of Augustus at, restored by Hadrian, vii. 351.
- Tarusates, an Aquitanian tribe, defeated by P. Cassius, i. 295.
- Tasgetius, massacred by the Carnutes, i. 391.
- Taurini, their dwelling-place, iv. 87. Foundation by Augusta of the Taurini (Turin), 88.
- Tauriscus, war of Octavius with the, iii. 232.
- Taxation, jealousy of, of the Romans, v. 344. Caius alienates the populace by his new and increased taxation, 344. Nero's proposal to abolish the whole system of indirect taxation, vi. 58.
- Tectosages, a Belgic tribe, defeated by the Romans, i. 295. Their incursions into the south of Gaul, 227.
- Telephus, the slave, his attempt on the life of Augustus, iv. 256.
- Temples, effect of the plunder of, upon the circulation of money, iii. 317. The temples the banks of the ancient world, 318. Restoration of the temples by Augustus, iv. 24, 27. The temple architecture of Rome, 391. The Roman principle of decorating not the exterior of their temples, but the interior of their dwellings, vii. 267.
- Tenchtheri, a German tribe, invade Belgium, i. 366. Subdued by Drusus, iv. 266.
- Tentyra and Ombi, the bloody quarrel of, vii. 375.
- Terentia, wife of Cicero, her high spirit, i. 319.
- Terentia, or Terentilla, wife of Mæcenas, her character, iv. 154. Her power over her husband, 154. Her amour with Augustus, 154, 156.
- Terminus, the god, worship of, iv. 27. System of augural limitation and the consecration of boundaries, 28.
- Teutates, Marscurius worshipped by the Gallic tribes under the name of, i. 223. Admitted to the citizenship of the Roman Olympus, iv. 84.
- Teutoburg, forest of, iv. 272.
- Teutones the origin and great migration of, i. 198-201. They defeat the Romans, overrun Gaul, and are annihilated at Aquæ Sextie, 201-204. Their enmity to the Celtic tribes, 227. Incursions of some of the tribes into Gaul, 231. Superstitious veneration paid by the ancient Germans to women, 260. Driven out of Gaul by Caesar, 261. Invasion of Britain by German tribes, 306. The Elbe-tribes plundered by a body of Germans, 331. Who attack the Roman station at Adianova, but are defeated, 403, 404. Chastised by Marcus Vinicius, iv. 71. Cross the lower Rhine and defeat Lollius, 155. See also Germany.
- Thames, the river, forded by Caesar, i. 388.
- Thapsus, occupied by Virgilius, ii. 294. Invested by Caesar, 294. Scipio defeated by Caesar at the battle of, 295. Sum exacted by Caesar from the citizens, 305.
- Thases, the remnant of the republicans at, iii. 172.
- Theatre of Augustus, iv. 409.
- of Balbus, iv. 409.
- of Pompeius, opening of the, i. 344.
- Its extent, iv. 403, 409.
- of Marcellus, iv. 410. Its extent, 403.
- Theatrical exhibitions of the Romans, iv. 410. Pantomime, 410. Spectacles, 411. Tiberius's control over the players, v. 149. Edict of Domitian against the mimes, vii. 109.
- Theodotus, the rhetorician, preceptor to Ptolemæus XIII., ii. 244. Takes Pompeius's head to Caesar, 254.
- Theogenes the soothsayer, and Octavius, iii. 69.
- Thermus, the tribune, stops the mouth of Nepos, i. 142. Abandons his post at Iguvium, ii. 190. Retreats to Apudis, 192. Joins Sextus Pompeius, but finally abandons him, iii. 294.
- Therma in Rome. See Baths.
- Theudas, a false Christ, or brigand, in Judea, vi. 420.
- Tholomeus, a false Christ, in Judea, vi. 420.
- Thoranius, his proscription and murder, iii. 144.
- Thrace, progress of the Roman arms in, in the time of Augustus, iv. 91. Revolt in, extinguished by L. Piso, 188. Governed by native kings, v. 142, 263. Quarrel in the royal family, and occupation of part of the country by a Roman officer, 268. Deprived of the autonomy of the remainder by Vespasian, vii. 23.
- Thrasea, Pactus, charges brought against him, vi. 165. His character, 166. Frivolous nature of the charges, 167. Consults with his friends the course he should adopt, 169. Proceedings against him in the senate, 170. His death, 172.
- Thrasyllus, the astrologer, his post in the

- household of Tiberius at Rhodes, iv. 234.
- Thusnelda, wife of Arminius. Delivered by her father Segestes as a hostage to the Romans, and sent to Ravenna, v. 82. Led in triumph by Germanicus, 48.
- Thysdrus, siege of, by the Caesarians, ii. 296.
- Tiberias, surrenders to Vespasian, vi. 437.
- Establishment of the Jewish schools at, vii. 292, 314. Preservation of the Jewish nationality by the teaching of the Jewish doctors at, 314.
- Tiberius Nero, his birth and parentage, iii. 218; iv. 125. Quæstor, iii. 338; iv. 128. Accuses Murena and Cæpio of conspiracy, iii. 367. Annexes Mæsia to Illyricum, iv. 89. Compels the Parthians to restore the standards of Crassus, 116. His campaign against the Vindelicians, 160. Consul, 161. His marriage with Vipsania, 170. Betrothed to Julia, but despatched before marriage to Pannonia, 170. His character in early life, 171-173. His marriage with Julia, 182. Crosses the Rhine and advances into Germany, 189, 190. Receives the tribunitian power for five years, 206. Retires dissatisfied to Rhodes, 207, 208. Effects of his retirement, 213. Interview with Calus Cæsar, 214. Recalled to Rome, and adopted into the Julian family, 221. Exhibited before the Romans as the partner of Augustus, 221. His gloomy prospects at Rhodes, 233. Addicts himself to astrology, 234. On his return from Rhodes, abstains from all public affairs, 235. Introduces his son Drusus to the citizens in the forum, 236. Composes an elegy on the death of Lucius Cæsar, 236. His campaigns in Germany, 237. His campaign against Morobodius, 245, 246. Exhibits games in honour of Drusus, 250. Completes the subjugation of the Pannonians, 255. The honours of a triumph granted to him, 265. Goes to the Rhine, 276. His bloodless campaign in Germany, 277. Assured of succession to the empire, 280. Completes the lustrum and resumes the command in Illyricum, 286. Summoned to the death-bed of Augustus, 287. Readiness of the Romans to acquiesce in his succession to the empire, v. 8. His self-distrust, 9, 26. Announcement of the death of Augustus, 10. Possible competitors already designated by Augustus, 10. Rumoured assassination of Agrippa Postumus, 11. Tiberius succeeds to the empire, 12. Pronounces the funeral oration over the body of Augustus, 15. His first address to the senate, 16. All the functions of empire left by tacit understanding in his hands, 17. Abolishes the last political privileges of the people, 17. Mutiny of the legions in Pannonia and on the Rhine, 18, 20. His jealousy of the popularity of Germanicus, 26, 36. Determines to employ the discontented soldiers, 26. His artifice in dealing with them, 27. His policy in the senate, 29. Death of his wife Julia, 29. His murmurs at the slender results of the campaigns in Germany, 36. The Romans offended at his jealousy, 36. Recalls his nephew Germanicus to Rome, 47. And sends him on a mission to the East, 50. His conduct on the death of Germanicus, 74-77. Checks the flow of public feeling, 75. Opens the trial of Piso with a speech, 81. Mitigates the sentence of the senate on Piso, 86. Tiberius free from all suspicion in regard to the death of Germanicus, 107. Intrigues of Libo Drusus, 83. His fear of the senate and consequent policy, 29, 91. His apprehensions relieved by the deaths of Germanicus and Piso, 91. Secretly influenced by Livia and Sejanus, 87, 92, 163. Logical character of his policy, 97. Has not a select council, but originates his own measures, 106. Rejects the petition of a pauper senator, 113. His conduct with regard to libels, 123. Injustice he has done his own reputation, 129, 130. Encourages criminal informers, 130, 136, 201. Contemporary opinion favourable to him, 140, 185. His military, civil, and provincial government, 142-152. Immorality ascribed to him, 155. His simple habits, and disregard of money, 156, 158. His show of deference to the senate, 158. His defects of temper and demeanour, 159. Comparison between Augustus and Tiberius, 162. His jealousy not alarmed by the inferior origin and talents of Sejanus, 163. Scions of the imperial family, 164. Associates himself with his son Drusus in the consulship, 164. Renewed disturbances in Africa and in Gaul, 166. The tribunitian power conferred upon Drusus in conjunction with the emperor, 171. His confidence in Sejanus, 175. His son Drusus poisoned by Sejanus, 176. His demeanour on the death of Drusus, 177. His pretended offer to restore the republic, 178. Jealousy of the family of Germanicus, 179. Deterioration of his principate from a.d. 23, 180. His motives for checking the delators, 184. Rejects the suit of Sejanus for Livilla, 187. Quarrels with Agrippina, 190. Eleven cities of Asia contend for the honour of making Tiberius their tutular deity, 193. Meditates retiring from the city, 194. His motives for quitting Rome, 195. Does not abandon public affairs in his retirement, 199. Retires to Caprea, 203. His life there, 207. Further deterioration of his government, 208. Death of his mother, 210. Complains to the senate of Agrippina and her son Nero, 214. Banishes Agrippina and her sons, 215. Prosecutes the friends of Livia, 216. His cruelty to Aulus Gallus, 218. His procrastination and irresolution, 219. His measures for the destruction of Sejanus, 223, 227. Refuses the title of Pater Patriæ, 228. His intense anxiety, 228. Takes vengeance for the murder of Drusus, 231, 233. Quits Caprea and approaches Rome, 231. But returns to Caprea, 232. Licentiousness ascribed to him, 233. Cruelty to Agrippina and her son Drusus, 235-238. His despair and apparent insanity, 240. Reflection on his general policy, 244. Question of the succession to the empire, 246. Appoints Calus and Tiberius Gemellus

- his private heirs, but leaves the succession undetermined, 250, 254. His end visibly approaching, 262. Power of the crafty Maecius, 253. Anecdote told of Tiberius by Josephus, 254. His last days and death, 255-258. His character, 258. Judgment of the Romans on his character, 259. Baneful influence of his latter years on society and literature: a reign of terror, 261. General state of peace and security of the provinces under him, 263-265. Expressions of indignation of the people on his death, 284. His will annulled by the senate, 285. His obsequies conducted by Caius, 287. Amount of treasure accumulated by him during his reign, 288.
- Tiberius**, Alexander, procurator of Judea, a renegade from Judaism, vi. 421. Prefect of Egypt, and joins the party of Vespasian, 438.
- Tiberius Gemellus**, grandson of the emperor Tiberius, v. 249. Appointed co-heir of the emperor's private fortune, 250. Put to death by the emperor Caius, 288.
- Tibullus**, Albius, confiscation of his patrimony, iii. 177; iv. 469. His poetry, 461.
- Ticinum**, military disturbance at, vi. 343, 344.
- Tigellinus**, praetorian prefect and minister of Nero, shares in his excesses, vi. 118. His fatal influence over the emperor, 119. His victims, Rubellius Plancus and Cornelius Sulla, 120. Presides at the examination of Octavia, 123. His infamous devices for the emperor's pleasures, 127. His *Æmilian Gardens*, 130. Triumphal statue awarded to him, 151. Sacrifices Petronius to his jealousy, 163. Head demanded by the populace after Nero's death, escapes through the intercession of Vinus, 302.
- Tigurini**, a Helvetian tribe, defeated by Caesar, i. 247.
- Tinnius Rufus**, baffled by the Jews in Palestine, vii. 318.
- Tiridates**, seizes the throne of Parthia, iii. 281.
- Tiridates**, son of Phraates, chosen king of Armenia, but subsequently dethroned v. 263; vi. 265. Does homage to Nero, vi. 268.
- Tiro**, M. Tullius, his life of Cicero, iii. 143. Cicero's favourite slave, iv. 309.
- Titianus**, brother of Otho, named consul, vi. 326. Placed in command of the army at the battle of Bedracum, 333. Pardoned by Vitellius, 341.
- Titus**, an Antonine officer, puts Sextus Pompeius to death, iii. 205. Deserts from Antonius to Octavius and divulges Antonius's will, 241. Gains a victory over Antonius's cavalry, 249.
- Titus**, Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, charged by his father with the conduct of affairs in Judea, vi. 351. Consul with his father, 376. Enamoured of Berenice, sister of Agrippa, 436; vii. 43. Conducts an army against Jerusalem, 454. His operations against the outer wall, 455. Draws a line of circumvallation round the city, 457. Captures the fortress Antonia, 460. Destruction of the temple, 465. Conclusion of the Jewish war, 471. Titus returns to Rome and triumphs with his father, 471. Erection of the arch of Titus, vii. 338. And of his baths, 339, 344. Contends in a sham fight with Cassius, 339. Assumes the empire on the death of his father, 42. His early life and character, 42, 43. Favour with which he was regarded by the Romans, 46. Declares his brother Domitian the partner of his empire, 47. He combines the suffrages, both of the nobles and of the people, 47. Disasters of his reign, 49. Dedicates the Colosseum, 50. His illness and death, 50. View of his character taken by Christians and Jews, 51.
- Togodumnus**, son of Cunobelinus, worsted by Aulus Plautius, vi. 22. slain, 23.
- Tigranes**, king of Armenia, defeated by Pompeius, i. 137.
- Tigranes**, placed by Corbulo on the throne of Armenia, vi. 265.
- Tolosa**, Roman colony at, i. 33, 208. The city sacked by Cæsar, 206 *note*.
- Tombs** by the sides of the roads approaching Rome, ix. 367.
- Trade combinations**, Trajan's jealousy of, vii. 213.
- Trajan**, father of the emperor, a Spaniard of Italian commands the 10th legion at Dacia, proconsul of Asia, vii. 172.
- Trajan**, M. Ulpius, his origin and early career, vii. 171, 172. His moderation in command, 174. His bridge across the Rhine at Mainz, 176. Commences a rampart from the Rhine to the Danube, 177. Adopted by Nerva, 168. His demeanour on entering Rome, 178. Magnanimity of his wife and sister, 178. Receives the title of Optimus, 180. His first Dacian campaign, 181, 185. Records it on the Trajan column, 187. His triumph and personal habits, 187. His second expedition to Dacia, 189. His stone bridge over the Danube, 191. Defeats Decebalus and makes Dacia a province, 190-197. Trajan's forum and column, 197-202. His architectural works in the city, and in the provinces, 204-206. His provincial administration, 206. His economical measures and charitable institutions, 208, 209. His measures for the special benefit of Italy and for maintaining the dignity of the senate, 211, 212. Pledges himself never to take the life of a senator, 213. His jealousy of guilds, 213. Splendour and economy combined in his administration, 214. His legislation, 215. His personal qualities, figure and countenance, 216-219. His correspondence with Pliny about the Christians, 229-232. Tradition of the church of his condemnation of Ignatius, 233. His presence demanded in the East, 236. Declares Armenia the vassal of Rome, 238. Reaches Antioch, 239. His escape during the great earthquake there, 239. His expedition into Armenia, 239. His cruel treatment of Parthamasiris, 301-303. Annexes both Armenias to the empire, 379. Crosses the Tigris and creates the new province of Assyria, 305. The title of Parthicus bestowed on him,

806. Takes Ctesiphon, launches on the Persian gulf, and subdues the Parthians, 806-808. Repulsed before Atræ, 808. His sickness and death at Selinus, 811. Fortunate in the moment of his death, 813. His apotheosis at Rome, 881. His eastern conquests abandoned by Hadrian, 882. Pliny's panegyric on him, 489.
- Transiberine quarter of Rome, described, iv. 384.
- Travelling, rate of, in the time of Augustus, iv. 821-823. Frequency of night travelling, 866.
- Treason, law of, or "majestas," iii. 864.
- Trebellius Maximus, his prefecture in Britain, vii. 69.
- Trebonius, C., serves under Cæsar in Gaul, i. 264. His law conferring provinces on Pompeius and Crassus, 341. His law for the prolongation of Cæsar's command in Gaul, 342, 343. His violence, 421. Joins Cæsar under the walls of Rome, ii. 128. Appointed to the command of the land forces for besieging Massilia, 180. His immense rampart on the land side of the city, 156. Made prætor of Rome, 201. And prætor of Further Spain, 268. Expelled from his government by the republican insurgents, 806. Joins the conspiracy against Cæsar's life, 874. Obtains the government of Asia, iii. 81. Establishes himself there, 94. Seized and murdered by Dolabella, 110.
- Treves, colony of, founded by Claudius, v. 879.
- Treviri, a Belgic tribe, i. 225. Defeated by Labienus, 399. Two of Cæsar's legions stationed in their country, 405. Again defeated by Labienus, ii. 36. Defeated by Nonius Gallus, iv. 70. In revolt against Rome, vi. 403. And again defeated, 405. Operations of Cerealis in their country, 406, 407.
- Tribunes, their power abridged by Sulla, i. 81. The *poteslas tribunitia*, iii. 360. The tribunitian power conferred upon Augustus, 360. Who affects the inviolability of the emperor, 861. Appellate jurisdiction of the tribunes, 862.
- Tributum, the, as a source of public revenue, iii. 493.
- Trinobantes, a British tribe, submit to Cæsar, i. 358. Their coinage, vi. 17. Their power, 18. Defeated by Claudius, 25.
- Trio, Fulcinius, lodges an impeachment against Piso, v. 73. His speech for the prosecution, 82. The emperor's caution to him, 87. Prosecutes L. Drusus, 90. Chosen consul, 222.
- "Tristia" of Ovid, remarks on the, iv. 464.
- Triumph, mode of conducting a, iii. 340.
- Triumvirate, formation of the First, i. 168. Reflections upon the character of this league, 169. Formation of the Second, iii. 185.
- Troy, game of, exhibited by Augustus, iv. 144. And by Claudius, v. 421.
- Tubero, entrusted by the senate with the cure of Africa, ii. 86.
- Tullia, daughter of Cicero, divorced from P. Dolabella, ii. 362. Her death, 362.
- "Turbot, council of the," vii. 140.
- Turones, a Gallic tribe, i. 215. Compelled to submit to the Romans, 282. Revolt, but are reduced, v. 167, 168.
- Turpillianus, Petronis, has the command of the legion in Britain, vi. 50. Put to death by Galba, 295.
- Turulus, in arms against the triumvirs, iii. 173.
- Tusculum, Cicero's villa at, described, i. 305. Favourite residence of Roman nobles, 804.
- Tutor, Julius, a Trevirian, joins a conspiracy to liberate Gaul, vi. 400. Defeated, 405.
- Tyre, complaint of the citizens of, of the extortions of Gabinius' publicani, i. 854. The temple of Melcarth at, plundered by Cæsar, ii. 276.
- UBII, a German tribe, slaughter the fugitive Suevi, i. 262. Their territory, 262 *note*². Encroachments of the Suevi on their territory, 868. Transplanted from the right bank of the Rhine to Cologne by Agrippa, iv. 81.
- Ulpia Trajana, capital of the Dacians, vii. 186; Roman colony at, 195.
- Ulpium Forum, the, vii. 202.
- Umbrenus urges the Allobroges to join Catilina, i. 209.
- Ummidius Vetus, jurisconsult in the reign of Antoninus Pius, vii. 405.
- Unelli, campaign of Sabinus against the, i. 289, 291. Defeated by Sabinus, 294.
- Ur, city of, of Scripture, i. 418.
- Urban cohorts in the time of Tiberius, v. 143.
- Usipetes, a German race, their invasion of Belgium, i. 366. Chastised by Drusus, iv. 179, 266.
- Utica, capital of the Roman province of Africa, ii. 165. Great muster of the republican chiefs at, 285. Saved from destruction by Cato, 287. His endeavours to defend the city against the Cæsarians, 298. Sum exacted by Cæsar from the citizens, 303.
- Uxellodunum, the last stronghold of the Gauls, stormed and taken by Cæsar, ii. 87.
- VACCAEI, a Spanish tribe, i. 155.
- Vadimonian lake, battle of the, i. 191.
- Valens, Fabius, legate of a legion on the Rhine, incites Vitellius to claim the empire, vi. 318. His crimes, 819. Advances through Gaul to Italy, 322. His rapacity and violence on his route, 323. Tamperers with the prætorians, 325. Sends troops to Forum Julii, 331. Insubordination in his camp, 338. His despatches to the senate, 339. Allows his troops to plunder the cities of Italy, 339. Meets Vitellius at Lugdunum, 340. He and Cæcina the real governors of the empire, 353. Re-embodies the prætorian and urban guards, 354. His doubtful conduct, 356. Quits Italy for the Narbonensis, taken prisoner in the Stœchades islands, 359. Slain at Urbium, and his head exhibited to the Flavians, 362.
- Valerius Asiaticus, his conduct on the assas-

- sination of Caius, v. 365. Aspires to the empire, 368. Consul A.D. 800, 416. Charges brought against him by Messalina, 416. Suicide of his wife, 417. Acquitted, but destroys himself, 418.
- Varinius**, the praetor, defeated by Spartacus, i. 50.
- Varus Rufus, L.**, his friendship with Maccenna, iii. 216.
- Varro, M. Terentius**, lieutenant of Pompeius in Spain, Caesar's opinion of him, ii. 128. His literary character, 131. His unfitness for military command, 131. Has two legions under him in the south and west of Spain, 132. His supineness, 133. His vacillating conduct and submission to Caesar, 160-162. Appointed keeper of the first public library at Rome, 386. Left by Augustus to chastise the Alpine mountaineers, iv. 63.
- Varro, Cingonius**, consul-designate, put to death, vi. 295.
- Varus, Arrius**, appointed prefect of the praetorians, vi. 373.
- Varus, Atilius**, retreats before Caesar, ii. 102. Commands the Pompeian forces in Africa, 165. Joined by Juba and Scipio, 283. His dispute with Scipio at Utica, 287. Escapes from Africa, 305. Joins the disaffected legions in Spain, 315. His defeat and death, 317.
- Varus, Quintilius**, crushes a revolt in Judea, v. 270. Appointed by Augustus to the command of the legions in Germany, iv. 260. Irritation caused by his indiscreet mode of governing the Germans, 270. Intrigues of Arminius, 271. Advance of Varus into the forest of Teutoburg, 272. Attacked on his retreat, and finally overpowered with the loss of three legions, 272, 273. The scene of this slaughter revisited by Germanicus, v. 33. Funeral honours paid to the remains of the slaughtered Romans, 33.
- Varus, Quintilius**, son of the preceding, prosecuted for treason or licentiousness, v. 202.
- Vatinius, P.**, elected praetor, i. 339. Defended by Cicero, 359. Gains an advantage over Octavius at sea, ii. 206. Becomes consul, 280. Commands for Antonius at Dyrrachium, iii. 158.
- Vectigalia**, Nero's proposal to abolish the, vi. 87, 88.
- Valento**, Fabricius, accused of libelling the senate, vi. 116. Banished and his looks burnt, 117.
- Veii**, settlement of the Roman colony of, ii. 328.
- Velabrum**, the, at Rome, described, iv. 363.
- Veleda**, a German prophetaess, priestess, and queen of the Bructeri, court paid to her by Civilis, vi. 402.
- Velula**, tablet of, vii. 208.
- Velleius Paterculus**, v. 230. His character of Sextus Pompeius, iii. 183.
- Velocassae**, a Belgian tribe, join the confederacy formed against the Romans, i. 267.
- Veneti**, a Gallic tribe, i. 281. Compelled by P. Crassus to submit to him, 282, 283. Their war with Caesar, 289-191. Their mode of warfare, 291. Defeated by the navy under Decimus Brutus, 292, 293.
- Vennonae**, an Alpine tribe, defeated by P. Silius, iv. 160.
- Ventidius Bassus**, Publius, apocryphal exploit of, ii. 122. Joins Antonius with three legions at Vada, 124. Made consul suffectus, 156. His remarkable story, 155. Places himself under the command of L. Antonius, 179. His successes over the Parthians, 190, 191. Resigns Antiochus in Samosata, 192. Granted a triumph, 192, 219.
- Venutius**, king of the Brigantes, vii. 36. Driven away by his wife Cartismandua, 39. Recovers his throne 39.
- Veranius**, prosecutes Cn. Piso, v. 82. Appointed governor of Britain, A.D. 61, vi. 42.
- Verceilae**, annihilation of the Umbri near, i. 206.
- Vercinotorix**, excites the Arverni to revolt, ii. 12. Persuades the Celtae to change their mode of warfare, 16. Consents to spare Avaricum, 17. Declines a battle with Caesar, 20. Rejoins Caesar at Gergovia, 22. His great preparations for meeting the Romans, 26. Defeated, 29. Occupies the fortified camp of Alesia, 29. Surrenders himself to Caesar, 33. Led in Caesar's triumph and strangled at Rome, 34, 309.
- Vergobret**, or chief magistrate, of the Gauls, i. 294.
- Veromandui**, a Belgian tribe, join the confederacy formed against the Romans, i. 267.
- Verres**, his spoliation of the province of Sicily, i. 71. Prosecuted, 71. Admits his guilt, and retires into exile, 72. Put to death, iii. 149 *note* 2.
- Verulamium**, or St. Albans, i. 388.
- Verus, L. Coccius Commodus**, adopted by Hadrian as his successor in the empire, vii. 385. His character, 385. His conduct in the field, 387. His premature death, 387.
- Verus, M. Annianus**. See Aurelius.
- Verus, L.**, adopted by Antoninus, vii. 388, 409. Associated by M. Aurelius with himself in the empire, 451. Assumes the command in Syria, 454. His reverses, 455. And victories, 455. Intrigues to overthrow his colleague and patron, M. Aurelius, 457. Triumphant with Aurelius, 457. Inroads of the barbarians, and supineness of Verus, 461. Joins Aurelius in the wars against the Quadi and Marcomanni, 464, 465. His return and death, 465.
- Vespasian, Flavius**, his campaigns in Britain, vi. 22, 25. Commands the forces destined for the reduction of Judea, 296. In Judea, 315, 428, 429. Reduces Galilee, Joppa, Tiberias, and Taricheae, 434-436. Takes Perea, 437. Watches the movements of Galba and Otho, 498. Deputes his son Titus to open the siege of Jerusalem, 454. His triumph, 471. Annexes Palestine to the empire, 473. His origin and early career, 346-345. His cause espoused by the Syrian legions, 349. Proclaimed emperor at Alexandria, 349. Prepares to contest the empire, 350. Marches upon Alexandria, 360. Date of

- his principate, 374. Declines aid from Parthia, 377. Vexed at the vices of his son Domitian, 378. Assumes something of a divine character in the eyes of the Romans, 380. Works miraculous cures at Alexandria, 381. Arrives at Rome, 382. Revolts in the provinces, 384, *et seq.* Closes the temple of Janus, vii. 10. Applauded for peace by the Romans, 14. His firmness, vigilance, and moderation, 16. His personal appearance and habits, 19, 20. Revision of the senate, 21. Demolishes Nero's golden house, 24. Restores the Capitol, 24. A deficit in the finances, 24, 25. His parsimony unjustly stigmatised, 25. Reconstitutes the older colonies, 26. His architectural works, 27. His endowment of literature, 28. His measures against the philosophers, 30. His erection of the Colosseum, 36. His death and character, 40, 41.
- Vestal virgins**, Domitian's zeal for the purity of the, vii. 103. His inquisition into their character, 104. Punishment of the culprits, 106.
- Vesuvius**, its appearance in the time of Tiberius, v. 207. Changes in its physical aspect, vii. 54. Great eruption of, 58-61.
- Vettius, L.**, an informer in the pay of the senate, i. 143. His mysterious disclosures of a plot for assassinating Pompeius and Cæsar, 174. His imprisonment and death, 174.
- Vetus, Lucius**, put to death with his mother-in-law and daughter, vi. 158.
- Vibullus, Rufus**, sent by Pompeius into Spain, ii. 128, 129.
- Vienna**, in Gaul, capital of the Allobroges, early Roman colony at, iv. 74.
- Viminal Hill**, the, in the time of Augustus, iv. 375.
- Vindelicia**, formidable position of, iv. 159. Incursions of the Vindelicians into the Cisalpine, 159. Completely subjugated by Tiberius, 160, 177.
- Vindex, Julius**, a Gallo-Roman of Aquitania, makes overtures to Galba for a revolt against Nero, vi. 280. Conspires with Virginius, and slays himself at Vesonio, 280. Nero hears of his revolt, 283.
- Vine**, alleged edict of Domitian respecting the cultivation of the, vii. 115.
- Viniolanus**, his conspiracy against Claudius and condemnation, v. 409-411.
- Viniolus, Marcus**, chastises the Germans, iv. 71, 287. Married to Julia, daughter of Germanicus, v. 249.
- Vinius, T.**, an adherent of Galba, accompanies him to Rome, vi. 294. Becomes consul with the emperor Galba, 296. Saves the life of Tigellinus, 302. Murdered in the Forum, 341.
- Vipsania**, daughter of Agrippa, iv. 169 *note* 1. Married to Tiberius, 170. Divorced, 170, 182. Married to Asinius Gallus, v. 217.
- Virgil**, confiscation and restoration of his patrimony, iii. 177; iv. 439. Taken into favour by Octavius and Mæcenæus, iii. 177, 216. The celebrated prophecy in his fourth Eclogue, 183. His thrilling sentiments in the first Georgic, 230. His description of the battle of Actium, 264.
- His story of Aristæus, iv. 53. Urged by Augustus to send him a specimen of his forthcoming epic, 66. His verses on the death of Marcellus, 133. His enthusiasm, 439. Remarks on his "Eclogues" and "Georgics," 440. And on his "Æneid," 443. His melancholy, 447. His death, 448. His personal appearance, 449. His works commanded by Caius to be removed from the public libraries, v. 338.
- Virgilius**, commands for Scipio in Thapsus, ii. 294.
- Virginus, Rufus**, commander of the legions in Lower Germany, conspires with Vindex against Nero, vi. 230. Refuses the title of imperator, 261. Alarm of Nero at the news of Virginius's revolt, 284. Carried off by Galba to Rome, 297. Consul-designate, 326. Again refuses the empire, 338. His narrow escape from the soldiers, 338, 343.
- Vitellius, Aulus**, his early history and character, vi. 315, 316. Proclaimed emperor by the Germanic legions, 319. Assumes the name of Germanicus and marches upon Italy, 321. His messages to Otho, 324. Defeats Otho, who commits suicide, 333-335. Accepted by the senate as emperor, 339. His soldiers plunder the Italian cities, 339. His march through Gaul to Italy, 340. His indulgence towards his enemies, 341. His gluttony, 342. His moderate edicts, 342. Waives the title of Augustus, 342. Disbands the prætorians and distributes the Othonians among various other legions, 343. His disorderly progress and brutal behaviour on the field of Bedriacum, 344. Withheld from entering Rome in the garb of war, 345. His moderate behaviour in the senate, and indiscreet comparison of himself with Thrasea, 352, 353. Governed by Cæcina and Valens, 358. Deserted by some provinces, feebly supported by others, 355. His troops defeated at Bedriacum, 357. His bestiality, fears, cruelties, and disasters, 358. Causes Junius Blaesus to be poisoned, 359. His slow and cautious policy, 360. Rouses himself from sloth and goes to Mevania, 361. Brought back to Rome by an insurrection in Campania, 361. Offers to resign the empire, but prevented by his soldiers, 362, 363. Neglects to escape, and conceals himself in the palace, 370. Dragged from his hiding-place and slain, 371. Remarks on his character, 372. Murder of his son, 382.
- Vitellius, L.**, compelled to march with Otho against his brother, A. Vitellius, vi. 330. Commands in Rome, 361, 363. Expels the Flavians from Tarracina, 363. Surrenders and is put to death, 373.
- Vitellius, L.**, father of the emperor, prefect of Syria under Tiberius, v. 79; vi. 262. Prosecutes Cn. Piso, v. 79, 82. Leads the forces of Asia and Syria against the Parthians, 263, 417. Recalls Pontius Pilatus from Judea, 271. His gross battery of Calus and Claudius, of Messalina and the Claudian freedmen, 417. One of the prosecutors of Valerius Asiaticus, 418. Gained

- over by Agrippina, 438. Brings forward a bill for marriage between uncle and niece, 439. Does not take part against Messalina, 447. Consul with Claudius, and left in charge of Rome during the absence of Claudius in Britain, vi. 24. Censor and thrice consul, 315.
- Vocates, an Aquitanian tribe, reduced by P. Crassus, i. 296.
- Vocantii, wars of Calvinus against the, i. 136.
- Voenia, Dillius, sent to relieve Castra Vetera, vi. 392. Succeeds Hordeonius Flaccus in the war against Civilis, 392. Releases Hordeonius, and puts the ring-leaders to death, 392-395. Defeated by Civilis, 396. Relieves Vetera, but suspected of corresponding with the enemy, 397. Takes shelter in Gelduba and Novesium, 397. Escapes, and saves Moguntiacum, 398. Put to death by Classicus, 400.
- Volca, the Tectosages of the, defeated by the Romans, i. 296. Their incursions into the south of Gaul, 226.
- Vologesus, chief of the Bessi, leads an unsuccessful revolt of the Thracians, iv. 188.
- Vologesus, king of Parthia, his treatment of Ptolemy and his two legions, vi. 267. Offers 40,000 horsemen to Vespasian for the conquest of Judaea, 377.
- Vologesus, a later king of Parthia, lays claim to Armenia, vii. 455. Defeated, 456. Sues for peace, 457.
- Volusenus, sent by Caesar to explore the coast of Britain, i. 578. Commissioned by Labienus to assassinate the Atracate Commius, ii. 85. Follows him from place to place, 38.
- Vonones, son of Phraates, ascends the throne of Parthia, v. 51. Deposed by his subjects, and takes refuge in Armenia, 51. Kept in custody by Silanus, proconsul of Syria, 51. His cause undertaken by Cn. Calpurnius Piso, 64.
- WAR, the laws of, as understood by the Romans, i. 402.
- Wines of Greece and Asia imported into Rome, iv. 316. Domitian's edict respecting the cultivation of the vine, vii. 115.
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- Wooden groves of Asia Minor, ancient trade in, iv. 316.
- XANTHUS, capital of Lycia, pillaged by M. Brutus, iii. 161: iv. 108. Compensated by Augustus, 108.
- Xenophon, Chionides's physician, v. 458. Poisons his master, 457.
- ZAMA, capital of Numidia, Juba's preparations at, in case of a defeat, ii. 301. Sale of Juba's property at, 304.
- Zarmanochanus, an Indian sage, admitted to the Eleusinian mysteries, and worships himself on a funeral pyre at Athens, iv. 119.
- Zealots, the party of independence in Jerusalem, vi. 427, 428. Their secret or secret assassins, 425. The most prominent of the chiefs of the Zealots, 429. Compared with the Montagnards of the French revolution, 447. They massacre the moderate party, and assume the government, 448. Divided into three factions, 449. Overawe the citizens of Jerusalem, 457, 458. Refuse terms from the Romans, under Titus, 462. Defend the Upper City, 466. Disturbances caused by a remnant of the Zealots in Alexandria, vii. 284.
- Zela, battle of, ii. 272.
- Zeno, son of Polemo, king of Pontus, crowned king of Armenia by Germanicus, v. 64.
- Zenodorus, the tetrarch, deprived of his territories, iv. 114.
- Zerunzeztana (Ulpia Trajana), the capital of the Dacians, vii. 186. Roman colony at, 195.
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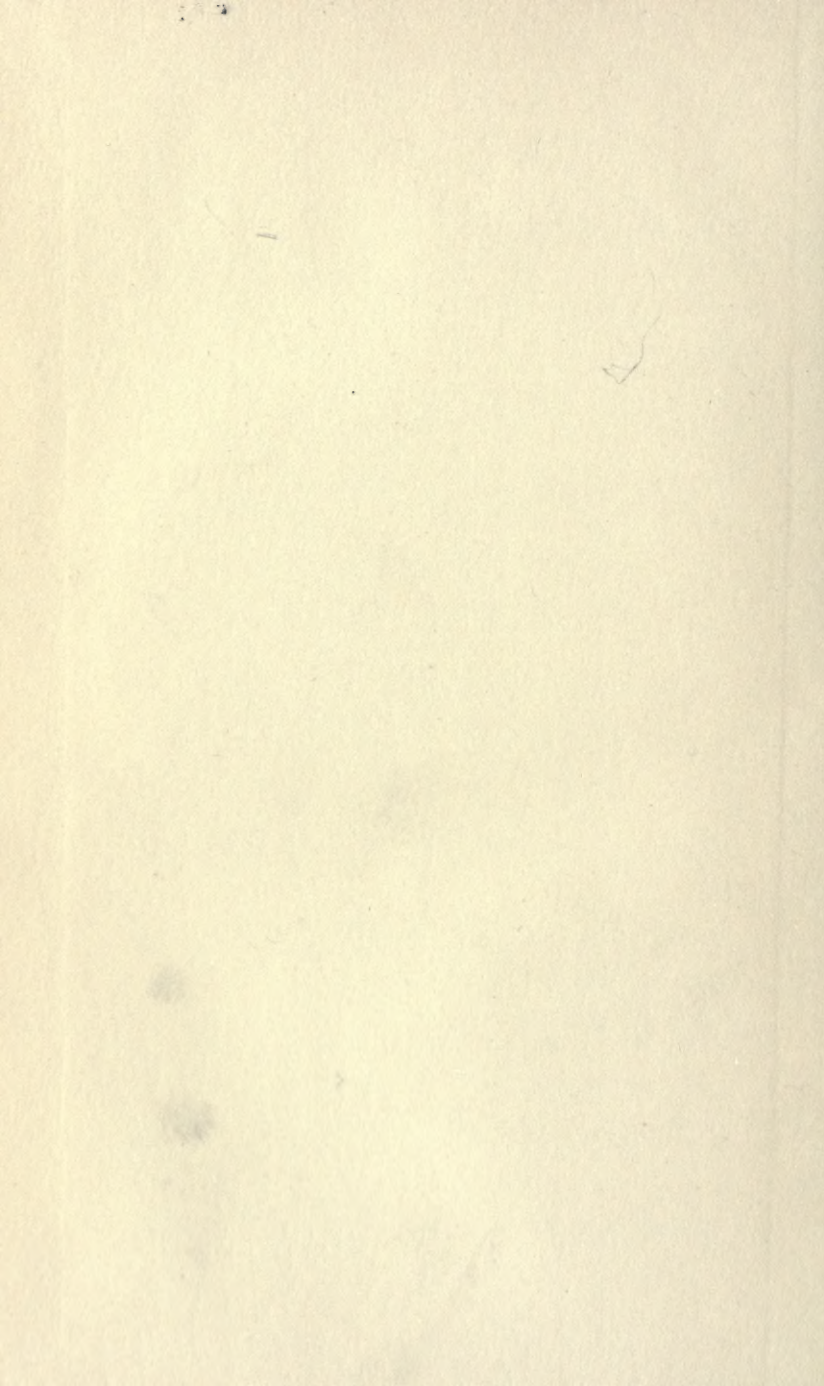
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